THE THEORY OF GOOD AND EVIL

A TREATISE ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY

BY

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THE THEORY OF GOOD AND EVIL

BOOK II

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIETY

CHAPTER I

THE HEDONISTIC CALCULUS

I

HAVING now sketched the outlines of a system of Ethics, I propose in the present book to examine some of the objections which have been or may be made to the positions heretofore taken up, and to consider some points of view more or less opposed to my own. In replying to the objections I hope I may be able to elucidate and develope, perhaps in some ways to qualify and to correct, the conclusions at which we have hitherto arrived.

The first of the objections with which I shall have to deal concerns what has often been called the hedonistic calculus.

It has been maintained in these pages that the criterion of an action—what constitutes it right or wrong—is its tendency to promote for all mankind a greatest quantity of good on the whole. This implies that 'good' admits of being measured, and that particular elements in that good are likewise capable of being measured, and of being compared with one another in respect of their ultimate value. This assumption involves the assertion (1) that each one of the various goods in which the ideal human life consists—Virtue, Knowledge, pleasure, &c.—is capable of quantity, so that I can prefer one course of action to another because it will promote more Virtue or more pleasure than another; and (2) that a given quantity of one kind of good can be quantitatively compared with another, at least to this extent, that there is a meaning in asserting that a given quantity

of Virtue is worth more or less than a given quantity of pleasure. Both of these assumptions have been denied.

I shall deal first with the denial that even goods of the same kind are capable of quantitative measurement. I hardly know whether the question has ever been explicitly raised as to the higher goods—Morality, Culture and the like—but the possibility of quantitative measurement has certainly been explicitly denied with regard to pleasure. That is the first question therefore with which we shall have to deal.

The doctrine that pleasures cannot be summed, that there is no meaning in the idea of a sum of pleasures and that consequently the 'hedonistic calculus' is impossible and unintelligible, has long been maintained by a certain section of anti-utilitarian writers, among whom it will be enough to mention the late Prof. T. H. Green and Mr. Bradley. It must be confessed, however, that it is not very easy to extract from either of these writers the exact grounds or even the precise meaning of their contention. Prof. Mackenzie in his *Manual of Ethics* and his *Introduction to Social Philosophy* has performed a real service by putting the doctrine into a form in which it is more easy to subject it to examination and criticism. In the present chapter, however, I shall not confine myself to what Prof. Mackenzie has advanced, as what appear to me the misconceptions which underlie his reasoning are widely diffused, and seem often to be assumed in the language of writers who have been less lucid and less explicit. My object is rather to get to the bottom of the misunderstanding than to criticize any particular writer; I do not therefore wish to be understood to hold Prof. Mackenzie responsible for every argument that I may criticize except where I expressly quote him.

At this stage of our discussion I need hardly repeat that I am not in the least interested in the defence either of the hedonistic Psychology or of hedonistic Utilitarianism, both of which I entirely reject on much the same grounds as those which would be assigned by the writers I am criticizing—writers with some of whom I should largely agree in their general view of Ethics. This is particularly the case with regard to Prof. Mackenzie, who is quite free from that sectarian prejudice against Casuistry and

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that dislike to the scientific treatment of practical problems which are characteristic of several writers by whom the incommensurability of pleasures has been maintained. I agree with him in holding that pleasure is part of the good, though not the whole of it, as *a* good but not *the* good. It would seem *prima facie* to follow that *ceteris paribus* the course of action which promises more pleasure must be preferred to one that promises less; and that, to ascertain whether an action should be done, I must ideally add together the pleasures or amounts of pleasure likely to be attained by it, and compare them with the pleasure promised by the alternative course. But here we are met by a denial that it is possible to sum pleasures at all.

It will be well to quote in full a few attempts to state the ground of this doctrine.

(1) We will begin with a passage from Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*: 'A "Summum Bonum" consisting of a greatest possible sum of pleasures is supposed to be definite and intelligible, because every one knows what pleasure is. But in what sense does every one know it? If only in the sense that every one can imagine the renewal of some pleasure which he has enjoyed, it may be pointed out that pleasures, not being enjoyable in a sum —to say nothing of a greatest possible sum—cannot be imagined in a sum either[1]. Though this remark, however, might be to the purpose against a Hedonist who held that desire could only be excited by imagined pleasure, and yet that a greatest sum of pleasure was an object of desire, it is not to the purpose against those who merely look on the greatest sum of pleasures as the true criterion, without holding that desire is only excited by imagination of pleasure. They will reply that, though we may not be able, strictly speaking, to imagine a sum of pleasures, every one knows what it is. Every one knows the difference between enjoying a longer succession of pleasures and a shorter one, a succession of more intense and a succession of less intense

[1] It is difficult to reconcile this statement with the admission 'that there may be in fact such a thing as desire for a sum or contemplated series of pleasures' (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 222). All that Green seems anxious to establish in this section is that without a permanent self there would be no such desire.

pleasures, a succession of pleasures less interrupted by pain and one more interrupted. In this sense every one knows the difference between enjoying a larger sum of pleasures and enjoying a smaller sum. He knows the difference also between a larger number of persons or sentient beings and a smaller one. He attaches therefore a definite meaning to the enjoyment of a greater nett amount of pleasure by a greater number of beings, and has a definite criterion for distinguishing a better action from a worse, in the tendency of the one, as compared with the other, to produce a greater amount of pleasure to a greater number of persons.

'The ability, however, to compare a larger sum of pleasure with a smaller in the sense explained—as we might compare a longer time with a shorter—is quite a different thing from ability to conceive a greatest possible sum of pleasures, or to attach any meaning to that phrase. It seems, indeed, to be intrinsically as unmeaning as it would be to speak of a greatest possible quantity of time or space. The sum of pleasures plainly admits of indefinite increase, with the continued existence of sentient beings capable of pleasure. It is greater to-day than it was yesterday, and, unless it has suddenly come to pass that experiences of pain outnumber experiences of pleasure, it will be greater to-morrow than it is to-day; but it will never be complete while sentient beings exist. To say that ultimate good is a greatest possible sum of pleasures, strictly taken, is to say that it is an end which for ever recedes; which is not only unattainable but from the nature of the case can never be more nearly approached; and such an end clearly cannot serve the purpose of a criterion, by enabling us to distinguish actions which bring men nearer to it from those that do not. Are we then, since the notion of a greatest possible sum of pleasures is thus unavailable, to understand that in applying the Utilitarian criterion we merely approve one action in comparison with another, as tending to yield more pleasure to more beings capable of pleasure, without reference to a "Summum Bonum" or ideal of a perfect state of existence at all? But without such reference is there any meaning in approval or disapproval at all? It is intelligible that without such reference the larger sum of

pleasures should be desired as against the less; on supposition of benevolent impulses, it is intelligible that the larger sum should be desired by a man for others as well as for himself. But the desire is one thing; the approval of it—the judgement "in a calm hour" that the desire or the action prompted by it is reasonable—is quite another thing. Without some ideal—however indeterminate—of a best state of existence, with the attainment of which the approved motive or action may be deemed compatible, the approval of it would seem impossible. Utilitarians have therefore to consider whether they can employ a criterion of action, as they do employ it, without some idea of ultimate good; and, since a greatest possible sum of pleasures is a phrase to which no idea really corresponds, what is the idea which really actuates them in the employment of their criterion[1].'

It will be observed that Green's objection is chiefly (1) to the idea of a *greatest possible* sum of pleasure and to the theory which finds in such a sum its ideal of human good. He does not deny that pleasures are capable of being summed, and that it is possible to compare the amount of pleasure on the whole which an action will bring with the probable results of another. Green, therefore, is in no way responsible for the view of his disciple, that even such a calculation is impossible. Of this view we may take Prof. Mackenzie as the representative.

(2) Prof. Mackenzie writes: '*Pleasures cannot be Summed.* It follows from this that there cannot be any *calculus* of pleasures—i. e. that the values of pleasures cannot be quantitatively estimated. For there can be no quantitative estimate of things that are not homogeneous. But, indeed, even apart from this consideration, there seems to be a certain confusion in the Hedonistic idea that we ought to aim at a greatest sum of pleasures. If pleasure is the one thing that is desirable, it is clear that a sum of pleasures cannot be desirable; for a sum of pleasures is not pleasure. We are apt to think that a sum of pleasures is pleasure, just as a sum of numbers is a number. But this is evidently not the case. A sum of pleasures is not pleasure, any more than a sum of men is a man. For pleasures, like men,

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, §§ 358, 359.

cannot be added to one another. Consequently, if pleasure is the only thing that is desirable, a sum of pleasures cannot possibly be desirable. If the Hedonistic view were to be adopted, we ought always to desire the greatest pleasure—i. e. we ought to aim at producing the most intense feeling of pleasure that it is possible to reach in some one's consciousness. This would be the highest aim. A sum of smaller pleasures in a number of different people's consciousnesses, could not be preferable to this because a sum of pleasures is not pleasure at all. The reason why this does not appear to be the case, is that we habitually think of the desirable thing for man not as a feeling of pleasure but as a continuous state of happiness. But a continuous state of happiness is not a mere feeling of pleasure. It has a certain objective content. Now if we regard this content as the desirable thing, we do not regard the feeling of pleasure as the one thing that is desirable; i. e. we abandon Hedonism [1].'

For purposes of criticism it will be convenient to break up the position of my opponents into three assertions, all of which seem to be implied by Prof. Mackenzie but of which the last might possibly be maintained without the second, or the last two without the first. I shall begin, that is to say, with the more extreme position, and then go on to the more moderate forms of the doctrine which I am criticizing. I may say at once that it is the first two which I am chiefly concerned to deny: the third seems to me to raise a more subtle and debatable question, and (while I am prepared to defend my thesis on this point) I attach little importance to it, and would particularly insist that failure to establish my position thereon should not be held in any way to invalidate my argument in relation to the other two. The three positions which I dispute are these:—

(1) That a sum of pleasures is not a possible object of desire.

(2) That while the proposition *this pleasure is greater or more pleasant than that* has a meaning, the judgement is not quantitative.

(3) That even if one pleasure or sum of pleasures can be said to be greater in amount than another, numerical values cannot,

[1] *Manual of Ethics*, 4th ed., pp. 229, 230. Cf. the same writer's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, 2nd ed., pp. 222–228.

with any meaning, be assigned to two pleasures or sums of pleasure; so that there can never be any meaning in the assertion 'this pleasure is twice as great as that.'

I may add that for the present I am dealing with the comparison of pleasures of the same kind or quality. Afterwards I shall have something to say as to the comparison of pleasures which 'differ in kind.' Meanwhile, the fact that I am confining myself to pleasures of the same kind may perhaps be my excuse if I take my illustrations for the most part from pleasures of a low type, such as those of eating and drinking. I do so simply because what I contend for is most clearly seen in the case of such pleasures. I make this remark to deprecate the wrath of critics who, while apparently not averse to a good dinner, seem to wish it to be understood that the pleasantness of the meal is to them a contemptible—not to say regrettable—accident involved in the pursuit of some higher end, the nature of which they never seem able to indicate with any precision. I need hardly say that I have no desire to emphasize the importance of the element contributed to human Well-being by those pleasures of eating and drinking to which the actual conventions of the most refined societies give a greater prominence than it is easy to justify. But however low we place them, and however strictly we think they ought to be limited, it seems impossible to justify any indulgence whatever in such things which goes beyond the imperative requirements of health and efficiency, unless we treat pleasure—even such pleasure—as a good.

II

Firstly, then, it is asserted that a sum of pleasures is not a possible object of desire.

This position would appear to be maintained upon one of two possible grounds:—

(*a*) It may be regarded as a corollary of the still more paradoxical doctrine that we never desire pleasure at all. This may mean that we never desire *a* pleasure, or that we never desire pleasure in general but always a particular pleasure.

Some writers would seem to deny the possibility of desiring either *a* pleasure or pleasure in general.

What lies at the bottom of these assertions seems to be the undeniable fact that it is impossible to *enjoy* pleasure in general or pleasure taken apart from everything else. What we enjoy is always a particular content—a pleasant sound, a pleasant sensation, a pleasant activity, a pleasant idea. A man whose consciousness was at any single minute full of nothing but pleasure would be an impossible variety of lunatic: for he would have to admit that he was pleased at just nothing at all. Pleasure apart from the pleasant something is of course a pure abstraction. When a man is said to desire pleasure, it is meant undoubtedly that he desires pleasant things, and further that he desires them simply because they are pleasant. Is not this a possible state of mind? It would seem that there are those who would be prepared to deny even this—who would say that even a particular pleasure, i. e. (of course) a particular pleasant content, is not a possible object of desire. Such a doctrine claims the high authority of Dr. Caird:—

'Further, *when* the desire of pleasure thus arises, it is in us combined with a consciousness for which pleasure *cannot* be the sole or the ultimate end, a consciousness to which, as universal, pleasure is not an adequate end. This may be shown in various ways, the most obvious of which is to point out that pleasure must be had in some object, for which there is a desire independently of the pleasure it brings[1].'

Now I have already contended that many—probably most—of our desires are not desires for pleasure but 'disinterested desires' or 'desires for objects,' and that in all such cases the satisfaction of the desire gives pleasure because the object has been desired; it is not desired, or at all events it is not desired solely, because it is calculated that the attainment of the given object will bring with it pleasure, and more pleasure than

[1] Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, II, p. 229. Prof. Taylor defends the to me still stranger idea that, though pleasure need not arise from the fulfilment of desire, 'neither worth nor goodness can properly be ascribed to it unless it is felt to be the realisation, in however unexpected a way, of some previously formed idea, the satisfaction of some previously experienced craving' (*The Problem of Conduct*, p. 327).

could be attained by the pursuit of any other object then within reach. As to what is commonly known as the 'hysteron-proteron of the hedonistic psychology' I have already insisted as strongly on it as I know how to do. But the question before us is not whether other things can be desired besides pleasures, but whether pleasures are or are not capable of being desired at all. Certainly I do not believe that an angry man desires vengeance because he has calculated—from his own experience or the recorded experience of others—that the pleasures of vengeance are the sweetest. Certainly there are cases where a man gratifies his anger or his desire of vengeance with the certain knowledge that his act will entail pains which no impartial calculation of pleasures could possibly conclude to be outweighed by the pleasure of satisfied anger or revenge. (We are obliged to use the language of common life, though of course upon the assumptions of the hedonistic psychology there could not really be such a thing as anger or passion of any kind.) Unquestionably there are cases where the uplifted arm would not be stayed by the most demonstrated certainty of the greatest sum of pleasures that earth has to offer. But is all this equally true of cases where a man desires to eat or drink something which experience has shown to be pleasant? The contention we are examining would seem to involve the assertion that, when a man who is not thirsty or in quest of health drinks port, he is impelled by a desire of port—port as such, port for port's sake. The niceness of the port is, it would seem to be hinted, a quite irrelevant circumstance. What he wants is port because it is port, not port because it is nice. If that were so, it would seem that the uplifted glass would not be put down even if some fellow-reveller warned the drinker, 'Don't drink this, it is beastly.' If the desire for port were based upon some antecedent desire other than desire for the pleasure of port-drinking, it would seem that the warning must necessarily pass unheeded. It may possibly be urged that what the man wants is both port and nice port: but that of course is to admit the opponent's case; the desire for pleasant sensation is one of his desires: he does desire pleasant sensation just because it is pleasant, whatever he desires or does not desire besides.

There can be no doubt that many even of what are called our sensual pleasures are conditioned by the presence of some desire which cannot be described as a desire for pleasure, or by some want or appetite of a kind which it is better perhaps to distinguish from the more rational class of 'disinterested desires.' There is a pleasure in getting warm when I am cold, in eating when I am hungry, and so on. But are all pleasures of sense of this kind? Such a contention seems to be opposed to the most familiar experience. I certainly often rise from my chair and stand before the fire, though I am not in the least cold, simply because experience has shown me that the practice is attended with pleasure. The continental stove may more than satisfy our desire of warmth, but Englishmen persist nevertheless in preferring their uneconomical open fires. The medical profession would be ruined if there were no pleasure in eating after hunger is satisfied, or if such pleasure could not become the object of desire. Moreover, the pleasure is in many cases quite independent of any previous desire at all—whether for that pleasure or for anything else. Where the pleasure arises from the satisfaction of desire, the pleasure cannot be felt when the desire is absent. If knowledge is forced on those who have no desire for knowledge, its attainment is often found by no means conducive to pleasure. But the teetotaler's appreciation of rum and milk might be by no means lessened by the fact that the rum had been surreptitiously introduced into the innocent beverage for which his soul had craved. That the pleasures of smell and sight and hearing are independent of previous desire attracted the especial notice of Plato. And while this independence of previous desire is characteristic of certain kinds of mere sensation, it is not limited to sensual pleasures. It is especially, I think, characteristic of the aesthetic pleasures. My appreciation of a landscape or a picture is in no way diminished because it comes in my way at a moment when I am thinking of something quite different. And if it be said that it appeals to me only because it satisfies a permanent desire for the beautiful which is capable of being aroused by the presentation of that which will satisfy it, one may ask, 'How in the first instance is the desire of beauty aroused?' Is it normally the case that people are led to the

search for beauty by a craving for what they have never experienced—as many both of the highest desires and of the lowest appetites do undoubtedly exist before they have received any satisfaction at all? Is it not rather some new, some unsought for, some wholly unanticipated experience of the pleasantness of beholding beautiful things which first rouses the desire to see more beautiful things?

I cannot but think that few even of those who deny the possibility of a 'sum of pleasures' will agree with Dr. Caird in holding that even particular pleasures cannot be the object of desire. But then it may be said: 'Yes, *a* pleasure may be desired, but not pleasure—a particular pleasure but not pleasure in general.' I have already admitted that we can never desire to enjoy pleasure alone; the pleasure must always come from some feeling, thought, or volition. So obvious a truism has so far as I am aware, never been denied. But need we always set our heart upon the enjoyment of some particular pleasant thing? There is something in common between all the things which give us pleasure: and that something is surely capable of being made the object of pursuit. When a boy begins to smoke, he is certainly not influenced by the desire of the characteristic smoker's pleasure, which he has never enjoyed and will not enjoy, very probably, for some time to come. There can be no image before his mind of a definite pleasant content; he does not know what the smoker's pleasure is, but he knows what pleasure in general is, and knows that he likes all kinds of pleasure. His notion of pleasure is made up by abstraction from all the pleasures he has ever enjoyed; there is no image of any particular pleasure before his mind. And, when he has gathered from the relation of credible witnesses that smoking is a source of pleasure, that is enough to set him in pursuit of it. If a booth were set up in a fair with the announcement 'Pleasure here *6d.*,' it is possible that it would not attract a large number of sixpences because there might be doubts as to the probabilities of the promised article being really supplied; but it does seem to me a strange position to deny the psychological possibility of some one individual paying his sixpence, not (as it is very likely some would do) for the pleasure of satisfying curiosity

but with the definite expectation of getting a fair sixpennyworth of enjoyment, and a broad-minded indifference as to the particular species supplied—so long of course as it was a pleasure to him.

I feel some diffidence in attempting a solemn argument in defence of a thesis which (with all respect for the eminent persons who deny it) seems to me so obviously true; and I confess I find it difficult to understand what exactly it is that is really meant to be denied when it is said that pleasure cannot be an object of desire. Is it the obvious fact that what we each care about is not all pleasure equally, but the particular pleasures which appeal to us? That is quite true, but then of course that which gives *me* no pleasure will not satisfy *my* desire of pleasure; nor shall I be much influenced by a desire for the pleasures which, though they are pleasant, I care little about, or which cannot be attained without sacrificing objects about which I care more than for such pleasures—perhaps more than for any pleasure small or great. Or is it implied that, though I do desire all pleasant things which really are pleasant to me, I do not desire them in proportion to their pleasantness? I agree, but that is only to say that I desire other things besides pleasure, and moreover that (speaking generally) the pleasures best worth having spring from the satisfaction of desires other than the desire for pleasure. All that has been admitted. What I contend for is that it is possible for a man to desire—and that all or almost all men do desire—pleasant things simply because they are pleasant, and that, *ceteris paribus* (where no difference of quality enters into the consideration and where no other desire would be thwarted), they desire the pleasanter things more than those that are less pleasant. That is what I understand to be meant by the assertion that pleasure (and not merely particular pleasures) is a possible object of desire.

There is one more line of argument which I would briefly suggest. Will those who deny that we desire pleasure, maintain that we have no aversion to pain? Here it can hardly be contended that it is merely certain particular psychical states—which merely happen to be painful—which inspire aversion, or that it is not the pain as such that we try to avoid, but

merely the frustration of some other desire, of which pain is a mere accidental accompaniment. It is, of course, often the case that pain is the symptom of something organically wrong, and again that mental pains do largely result from the frustration of some desire. But there are many conditions of body to which we should have no objection for any other reason than that they happen to be painful. Who would care about being told by a Physiologist that certain thrills are coursing down his nerves, if they did not reveal themselves in painful sensation: or that there was caries in his tooth, if he could be sure that the tooth would never become either painful or less useful? If you will insist on abstracting the content of pain from the pain itself, it is surely the pain that we avoid, not the content. We avoid pains, the content of which we know nothing about. We do not think it necessary to try new pains which we cannot without experience even picture to the imagination, under the expectation that, though other pains are to be avoided, it might turn out that this pain was rather desirable than otherwise. If we know that the psychical state produced by such and such a bodily affection is painful, that is quite enough for us. Unless they suppose the pain to be a means to something other than itself or an inseparable element in some other good, all rational men avoid it: and it will hardly be denied that they avoid the severer pains more than the less severe. All pains are to them objects of aversion, and objects of aversion in proportion to their painfulness. That is what is meant by saying that pain as such is an object of aversion. I do not know that any one who admits that pain is an object of aversion but still denies that pleasure is a possible object of desire can be convicted of any actual logical inconsistency: but the position is, to say the least of it, a singular one.

(*b*) But, as I have already indicated, there are writers whose denial that pleasures can be summed or that a sum of pleasures can be desired does not carry with it the assertion either that pleasures are not possible objects of desire or even that pleasure in general may not become the object of pursuit. Their objection to a summation of pleasures rests upon other grounds; and seems for the most part (so far as I can gather) to be based upon the

very simple fact that we cannot enjoy a sum of pleasures all at once—that a sum of pleasures is not capable of existing altogether at a given moment of time. Perhaps the best way of dealing with this objection will be to point out that the contention is as fatal to the existence of a desire for pleasure, or even for one single definite pleasure, as to the desire for a sum of pleasures. The briefest pleasure occupies a sensible time: and there is no time that cannot conceivably be subdivided into two halves. If, therefore, I cannot desire anything which I cannot have all at once, I could not desire either pleasant consciousness in general or any particular state of consciousness which is pleasant. The argument in fact goes further than this: it would prove not merely that pleasure cannot be desired, but that there can be no such thing as pleasure, since an indivisible point of pleasure could not be felt at all and therefore would not be pleasure. If so, of course, *cadit quaestio.* But I must ask to be excused from attempting the task of proving to the sceptic that the word pleasure signifies something which has actual existence[1]. Assuming that there is such a thing as pleasure, it must (at least for human beings here and now) be in time: and the time or the temporal state that is incapable of division is not time or in time at all. We have heard, of course, of the timeless self and its aspirations after a good which, though it is not in time, is, it seems, to have a beginning, and to be capable of being brought about by human acts which take place within the time-series: but I am not aware that the supporters of the timeless self have usually assigned to it a timeless pleasure[2]. At all events, if any such thing there be, it must be something quite different from what I—and, I am persuaded, the majority of my readers—understand by the word. As I understand a sum of pleasures, every pleasure is really a sum of pleasures:

[1] The reader may possibly demand at this point a definition. Something will be said on this subject at the end of the next chapter. Here I will only remark that most of the attempts at definition fail so grotesquely that I feel little inclination to add to the number.

[2] It is true that Dr. McTaggart has suggested the possibility for beings in another state of a 'timeless pleasure,' but he does not regard such a pleasure as possible in our present condition. As far as this life is concerned, he admits the possibility of a 'sum of pleasures.'

it is impossible to desire pleasure at all without desiring a sum of pleasures. What I understand by the assertion that I desire a sum of pleasures is that I desire to enjoy pleasure as intense as possible and for as long as possible—that I desire two minutes' pleasure more than I desire one minute of the same pleasure, and further that I regard the intensity of one pleasant moment as something which can be equated with the duration of another pleasant state; so that, on comparing the duration and intensity of pleasure which will be secured by one course of conduct with the duration and intensity of pleasure which I may win by another, I can pronounce which on the whole appears to me to possess the greatest pleasure-value, and can (in so far as I am in pursuit of pleasure to the disregard of other considerations) determine my action by that judgement.

Professor Green's argument against the idea that something which cannot be enjoyed all at once can be the *summum bonum* does not directly concern us here, but it seems to me open to much the same objections as have been urged against the denial that a sum of pleasures is a possible object of desire. His argument seems to amount to the assertion that a sum of pleasures cannot be made the object of pursuit because you can never reach it, while a greatest possible sum of pleasures is a contradiction in terms, since when you have enjoyed any given amount of pleasure, it is always still possible to desire more. I should myself be prepared to contend that any other view of the ethical end is liable to the same objection, since any good for man must be in time, and can never be seized once for all as a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί; I am not, however, arguing that a sum of pleasures is the true ethical end, but only that it is an intelligible object of pursuit. To aim at a greatest possible sum of pleasures means to endeavour that as much pleasure should be got into a given time as possible and that the time in which we are enjoying pleasure should be as long as possible. Nobody, I take it, has ever maintained the possibility of arriving at a sum of pleasures in any other sense. The greater durability of some sources of satisfaction as compared with others is no doubt an important reason for the higher value we attribute to them, but the consciousness which enjoys even the most spiritual good must

be in time; the enjoyment of it can never be so far exhausted that we can say that an addition to it would be no addition to the good hitherto enjoyed. To argue that a sum of pleasures cannot be the good because they cannot be enjoyed all at once is about as reasonable as to argue that the virtues cannot be the good because they cannot all be practised in an 'atomic now' or even during the same five minutes[1].

III

(2) It is asserted that whereas the proposition 'this pleasure is greater than that' has a meaning, the judgement is not quantitative.

The idea that degree involves quantity has been pronounced by Prof. Mackenzie a crude notion[2]; but it is a crude notion which has commended itself (unless I greatly misunderstand them) to Kant, to Prof. Bosanquet[3], and on the whole to Mr. Bradley. I do not propose to discuss the matter more in detail as a matter of pure Logic, but will simply refer to Mr. Bradley's very subtle paper on the question: 'What do we mean by the intensity of psychical states?[4]' I do not underrate the difficulty, insisted upon by Mr. Bradley with his usual penetration, of saying exactly what it is that there is more of in one psychical state—a state of pleasure or a state of heat—than in another. But Mr. Bradley, though his discussion is aporetic, seems to be indisposed to deny that, however this question be answered,

[1] 'So long as we exist in time, the supreme good, whatever it is—perfection, self-realisation, the good will—will have to manifest itself in a series of states of consciousness' (McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 109). 'It will, I believe, be found . . . that, reasonably or unreasonably, we are continually making calculations of pleasures and pains, that they have an indispensable place in every system of morality, and that any system which substitutes perfection for pleasure as a criterion of moral action also involves the addition and subtraction of other intensive quantities. If such a process is unjustifiable, it is not hedonism only, but all ethics, which will become unmeaning' (ib., p. 111).

[2] *Social Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 230.

[3] 'A quality that changes, and yet remains the same quality, has passed into quantity' (*Principles of Logic*, I, p. 118).

[4] *Mind*, N. S., Vol. IV (1895). Cf. *Ethical Studies*, p. 107.

the judgement is quantitative. And I find it difficult to treat seriously the assertion to the contrary. We certainly say: 'This is *more* pleasant than that[1].' The position that the word *more* does not involve the idea of quantity is so startling that I must excuse myself from further discussion of it until it be developed in more detail than has yet been the case. It is true that 'intensive quantity' is not the same thing as 'extensive quantity'; but if 'intensive quantity' has nothing in common with 'extensive quantity' why do Philosophy and Common Sense alike call each of them 'quantity'?

Whatever be thought of the logical doctrine that degree does not involve quantity, it is enough for my present purpose if it be admitted that one whole state of consciousness of a certain character is pronounced more pleasant than another, provided it be conceded also: (*a*) that the total pleasure in each case is made up of a number of successive moments; (*b*) that a certain degree of intensity is actually judged to be the equivalent of—and may influence desire and volition as the equivalent of—a certain degree of duration: in other words, that a man in pursuit of pleasure may choose, and may judge it reasonable to choose, a less pleasure for a longer time rather than an intenser pleasure for a shorter time; (*c*) that a whole pleasant state may be analysed into various distinguishable elements.

The first two of these propositions can hardly, as it seems to me, be denied without going the length of saying that the duration of a pleasure, if it only be intense enough, is a matter of absolute indifference to us. And it has been contended by

[1] That Mr. Bradley believes it possible to sum pleasures may, I think, be inferred from his elaborate discussions as to whether, in the Absolute, there is or is not a 'balance of pleasure.' Such passages as the following could have no meaning if it were not possible to add pleasure and pain together, arrive at their sum and subtract the pleasure from the pain or the pain from the pleasure: 'We found that there is a balance of pleasure over and above pain, and we know from experience that in a mixed state such a balance may be pleasant. And we are sure that the Absolute possesses and enjoys somehow this balance of pleasure. But to go further seems impossible. Pleasure may conceivably be so supplemented and modified by addition, that it does not remain precisely that which we call pleasure' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 534).

Prof. Mackenzie that those who maintain the possibility of adopting the hedonistic calculus as a guide in conduct are involved in some such absurdity.

But, it may be said, we can surely estimate pleasures at least with reference to their duration. I may be aware that at each of two successive moments I have a pleasure of approximately the same degree; and I may thus be entitled to say that the pleasures of these two moments taken together are twice as great as the pleasure of one of them alone would have been. Surely $1 + 1 = 2$. Now, to this the obvious answer is that it is indeed true that $1 + 1 = 2$, but it is also true that $1 + 1 - 1 = 1$. When the second pleasure is added the first is taken away, and there is only one left. If I have only one pleasure now, I am none the richer for the fact that I had another before. It is true that I may survey my life as a whole, and perceive that I was pleased at so many different moments; and it might be an amiable hobby on my part to try to make the number of pleasant moments as large as possible. But I should not be any the better off for such an effort. At the present moment I am just as happy as I am, and no happier: I am not also as happy as I was, or as happy as I shall be. In the past, on the other hand, I was as happy as I was; and in the future I shall be as happy as I shall be. Every moment stands on its own basis; and the number of moments makes no difference to the happiness of life as a whole, because, according to such a view, life is *not* a whole. "A short life and a merry one" is as happy as a long one. A moment of blessedness' [upon the hypothesis that pleasures can be summed] 'would be as good as an eternity, because the eternity would only go on repeating the blessedness and not increasing it[1].'

I can only say that most of us would attach considerable value to what Prof. Mackenzie dismisses with a contemptuous 'only.' If we could attain this moment of blessedness, that is exactly what we should want—that it should be repeated as often as possible. There is no arguing about these matters of psychological experience and ethical judgement. I can only say that as a matter of fact I would not take the trouble to walk

[1] *Social Philosophy*, pp. 231, 232.

across the street to get a moment of blessedness if I were assured that the blessedness would occupy my consciousness only for $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second[1]. I will add once more a reminder —too often forgotten in the polemics of anti-hedonists—of the parallel case of pain. Prof. James has somewhere remarked that the utmost degree of torture of which human consciousness is capable would be a matter of supreme indifference to him if he could be assured that it would last only some infinitesimal time. Would Prof. Mackenzie be prepared to say that, if condemned to such a torture, it would be a matter of indifference to him how long it went on?

Now it is true that Prof. Mackenzie is here indulging in what appears to him a *reductio ad absurdum* of the hedonistic view of Ethics. But I fail to see how he can himself escape adopting such a consequence as his own except by insisting that the good, which is the true end of human life, is something out of time altogether, a view which, however unintelligible, is open to writers like Green who did not regard pleasure as a good at all, but does not seem to be open to those who, like Prof. Mackenzie, do regard pleasure as *a* good and part of *the* good. There is just the same logical difficulty about any view which admits pleasure to be a good at all. A pleasure, however brief, can be enjoyed only while it is there: it can be enjoyed afterwards only in so far as the recollection of the past pleasure is itself a fresh pleasure. It is true that the possibility of such recollection implies the belief in a continuous or permanent self which is denied by such writers as Hume; but Hume's view of the self is not involved in the recognition of the hedonistic calculus as a possible and (as far as it goes) a rational proceeding. If pleasure be of any importance at all, it must follow, it seems to me, that *ceteris paribus* its importance must be proportional to its duration. And, as I have already sug-

[1] If what is wanted is a timeless 'blessedness,' though personally I attach no meaning to such an expression, we may usefully remember Dr. McTaggart's distinction: 'Absolute perfection—the supreme good—is not quantitative. But we shall not reach absolute perfection by any action which we shall have a chance of taking to-day or to-morrow. And of the degrees of perfection it is impossible to speak except quantitatively' (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 113).

gested, exactly the same line of objection may be taken to regarding as the good any possible state of a conscious being which is in time. If it may be argued that, supposing pleasure to be the good, a moment of it ought to be as good as an eternity, then why not a moment of holiness or a moment of 'Self-realization'? If the 'self-realization' which Prof. Mackenzie wants is not in time at all, how can it be an object of human effort? If it is in time, would he not think a longer duration of it better than a shorter?

If then duration of pleasure is desired as well as intensity of pleasure, will it be denied that, in choosing between two pleasures (i. e. between the psychical consequences of alternative acts of choice), we do balance duration against intensity, and choose that which promises most pleasure on the whole—the discomforts of a four hours' passage on a good boat against the horrors of two hours on a bad one, or (if income be severely limited) the three hours of fierce delight (*plus* a certain amount of retrospective pleasure afterwards) which five shillings will buy at a theatre against the calmer but more prolonged enjoyment of a five-shilling book? This is all at bottom that is meant by the much-decried idea of a hedonistic calculus—all perhaps that it is absolutely necessary to contend for. But there is, as I have suggested, one point more—not perhaps absolutely essential to the idea, but usually implied in it, and it is this probably which is most apt to be denied by the more moderate of those who object to the expression 'sum of pleasures'—and that is the notion that the total whole of pleasant consciousness is made up of distinguishable elements. I say distinguishable, i. e. logically distinguishable, not capable of actual separation. My consciousness at any given moment is no doubt a whole which cannot be separated into parts like a material object, but it is possible to distinguish in the total 'psychosis' many different elements. Sometimes the elements are capable of being distinguished even to the extent of retaining approximately when in combination the pleasurableness or painfulness which they have when separate. Thus I may be conscious at one and the same time of a pain in my toe, another in my head, and a pleasant interest in the story that

I am reading. At other times, and this is generally the case, no doubt, where no definitely localized pain enters into consciousness, the elements seem so far fused together that it is only by a considerable effort of reflection (aided by memories which enable me to apply the method of difference or of concomitant variations) that I can distinguish how much of my total pleasant state is due to the different elements. That is the case, for instance, when I ask myself how much of the general sense of exhilaration which I have experienced at a pleasant party was due to the dinner, how much to the champagne, how much to the company; or when I attempt to say how much of my depression is due to biliousness and how much to the disappointment or annoyance on which at such seasons I may be apt to brood.

And yet, in spite of all the difficulties of such discrimination, we do make such distinctions in reflecting upon past pleasures, and we use the result of such experiences in guiding our choice for the future. We have two invitations for the same night. We might say to ourselves: 'True, *A*'s dinner will be more sumptuous than *B*'s, but I like *B*'s superior wine better than *A*'s superior cookery, and the conversation will be much better. Therefore to *B*'s I will go, and *A*'s invitation I will decline.' It is true of course—and this seems to be the only serious difficulty in treating such cases as a summation of pleasures—that the hedonistic value of a pleasure in combination with others may be something quite different from its value when taken by itself, or rather (since we never do enjoy an assignable pleasure absolutely 'by itself') when experienced in a different psychical setting or context. The dinner which helps us to enjoy the evening in pleasant company would simply bore the man who is not a gourmand, if consumed in solitude or in the company of dull persons. The values that we sum are altered by the summing or rather by the combination. And this objection may be treated as fatal to the whole idea of a 'sum of pleasures.' But after all it is not the values that they have in separation but the values that they have as elements in the whole that we are summing; though our experience of them in separation or in other surroundings may be more or less of a help in estimating

how much they will contribute to our enjoyment of the total consciousness into which they enter. It is true that my enjoyment of a certain man's company may be either greater or less when I meet him in a Swiss hotel than when I meet him in a College common-room: but that does not prevent my experience of his society in Oxford leading me to think that his presence will be a material addition to my enjoyment at such and such a Swiss hotel and determining me to go there in preference to one which I should otherwise have decidedly preferred. It is then undeniable (as it seems to me) that we can distinguish elements in a whole of pleasant consciousness. The society of my friend and the enjoyment of Alpine scenery may give me a total of pleasure both greater and different in kind than I should derive from the two taken separately. But that does not prevent my putting together in my mind the probable enjoyment which I shall derive from the scenery and the probable enjoyment which I shall derive from the company of my friend, and recognizing that the two elements go to form a whole of pleasure which is greater than either. If on comparing any two whole psychoses I find that one would be preferable to the other but would become less desirable when a certain assignable element is taken away, there is surely a real meaning in saying that such a whole of pleasure is a sum of pleasures. No doubt, as the Logicians remind us, the whole is something more than the sum of its parts; but the expressions 'whole' and 'part' have a real meaning for all that: the whole *is* the sum of its parts, though it is something more. Or to take a more concrete and material parallel, I may judge how many pailfuls of water it will take to fill a cistern by adding together the capacity of each pail, though I must not forget to allow for the considerable quantity which will be lost in the process of adding them together, or the quantity that will be added if it is raining.

IV

(3) There remains for discussion our third and last thesis: that, though one pleasure may be greater than another, it can never be described as twice as great—that degrees of pleasure cannot be numerically expressed.

The question raised by this assertion is to my mind much more difficult and debatable than any that we have so far discussed, and the assertion that pleasures do admit of arithmetical measurement is in no way necessary to justify us in talking about a sum of pleasure or a hedonistic calculus. I hasten to add that as a general rule our judgements about pleasure are expressed in the form of 'more' or 'less,' not of so many times more or less. It is only in the simplest cases that we can attempt to compare pleasures with so much nicety; and, as such judgements are of no practical use, we do not commonly make them. Still, I am prepared to maintain that the judgement 'this pleasure is twice as great as that' is not absolutely without meaning. In the first place, it appears to me self-evident that the value of a pleasure is dependent upon its duration, and that two minutes of a given pleasure may be fairly said to be twice as pleasant as one minute of it—if it is really the same pleasure and is not diminished by satiety. Further, if it be admitted that we are in the habit of equating the intensity of pleasure with a certain duration of it, it would seem possible to indicate our sense of the comparative intensity of two pleasures by expressing them (so to speak) in terms of duration. If it is a matter of indifference to me whether I enjoy one minute of one pleasure or two minutes of another, I may reasonably be said to regard the one pleasure as twice as pleasant as the other [1]. Even in far more complicated cases—even in estimating the extent to which various elements contribute to a total state of continuous pleasure—it does not seem to be meaningless to express one's sense of the comparative value of the different elements by assigning to them numerical values. In comparing one friend's dinners with another's there would be nothing unmeaning—though for many practical reasons we rather avoid such exact mensuration of pleasures—in assigning so many marks to the dinner, so many to the wine, so many to the conversation with (if you like) a few plus or minus marks for the arrangement of the table, the post-prandial music and

[1] 'I feel no hesitation in affirming that the pleasure I get from a plate of turtle-soup is more than twice the pleasure I get from a plate of pea-soup' (McTaggart, l. c., p. 117).

so on. We might express our sense of the comparative enjoyment afforded by the two entertainments and the extent to which each element contributes to the total, by assigning marks to each such element and then adding them together. I admit that such numerical expressions would in general be wholly useless, but it would correctly express the sort of way in which we do make up our minds between alternative courses by a mental or ideal summation of the pleasure which we expect to derive from them. When we have decided on which side the balance lies, we usually stop, because when we have determined that we are going to prefer *A*'s entertainment to *B*'s, no purpose is served by attempting to estimate or to express the degree of our preference. As a general rule there would be no use in such an attempt, but it is possible with a little ingenuity to imagine circumstances in which it *would* be of use. If a prize were offered to the host who would give us most pleasure in the course of six entertainments with or without a certain limit to the expense, the judges in such a competition would, I imagine, have to record their impressions of each entertainment in some such way—very much as a man who is judging prize poems might quite intelligibly (though I do not recommend the method) arrive at his decision by assigning so many marks for language, so many for ideas, so many for rhythm, and so on. To avoid an irrelevant objection I admit at once that it is very rarely—only, perhaps, in regard to the choice of mere amusements, and not always then—that we do make our conduct depend upon such purely hedonistic calculations, unmodified by other considerations. But, if there seems to be something rather tasteless and repellent about the analysis of these hedonistic calculations for ourselves, we have constantly to make them for others. A man who has determined to provide a school treat for a number of children, and to devote thereto a definite sum of money, aims, I suppose, at producing a maximum of pleasure; though I have heard a Moral Philosopher of some distinction gravely express a doubt as to whether the good will could ever express itself by giving pleasure to others. The giver of such a treat knows that, if he provides fireworks, he must cut down the prizes for races, that if he gives the children a better class

of cake he will not be able to give them sweets too, and so on. If it helped him (and it is quite possible that it would help an old Schoolmaster) to express the value of the pleasure which each shilling expended in different ways would buy by assigning marks to each item and then totting them up, I do not see that there would be anything essentially unmeaning or irrational about his procedure. No doubt in such cases our estimates are exceedingly rough, but that does not make it actually impossible to express our judgement in numbers. It is far easier to say that one flock of sheep is bigger than another than to say by how many it is bigger, but that does not alter the fact that if one flock is bigger than another, it is because it contains more sheep. Our estimate is none the less quantitative because it is vague [1].

But I have not yet done justice to Prof. Mackenzie's strongest argument. He tells us that the proposition 'this is twice as pleasant as that,' is as unmeaning as the judgement 'this is twice as hot as that.' Now it is to my mind undeniable that in the case of sensible heat or of any other sensations which admit of being arranged in a scale, quantitative measurement is essentially impossible. But I contend that pleasure does not belong to this category at all, and I will try to show why. The reason why it is impossible to express degrees of sensible heat quantitatively is that there is no equivalence between the difference between any two degrees of sensible heat and the difference between any two other degrees [2]. Let the line *A Z* represent the various possible degrees of sensible heat ranging from a coldest *A* to a hottest *Z* (of course I do not attempt to answer the physiological question whether there is a minimum or maximum of possible sensible heat).

A B C D E F . . . . . *Z*.

The reason why I cannot mark off this line into degrees to which I might assign numbers like the numbers which express the de-

[1] Attempts have been made to show that such judgement *may* be only qualitative (e.g. the unreflecting and unanalysed judgements of savages); but they are not convincing.

[2] It may be that for many practical purposes it may conveniently be assumed that the degree of sensible heat will correspond to the degree of the physical stimulus.

grees of physical heat on a thermometer is that I cannot say that D is as much hotter than C as Y is hotter than X [1]. But in comparing pleasures I have no difficulty in doing this [2]. If I would as

[1] This position is admirably defended by M. Bergson in his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la Conscience* (4me éd., 1904), pp. 42 seq. I cannot, however, follow him in his attempt to show that there is no meaning even in saying that one psychical state is *more* intense than another—that psychical states differ *only* qualitatively, and that there is no such thing as intensive quantity. Is it possible to deny that we can arrange feelings of heat or sensations of blue in a scale entirely apart from the association of these sensations with their physical causes? M. Bergson demands what it is of which there is more in one such state than another. No doubt this 'something more' is something which cannot be isolated and experienced by itself: we do not, in experiencing a sensation of dark blue, experience a sensation of light blue + another distinct sensation. That would no doubt involve the fallacy of 'mental chemistry.' But in denying that a sensation of light blue has in it something in common with a sensation of dark blue, he seems to fall into the fallacy of psychological Atomism. He does well to insist on the uniqueness of all psychical experience. It is true that our concept of blue is not any particular sensation with all its particularity, and that each degree of a sensation has a quality of its own which cannot be expressed quantitatively: but, unless conceptual thought could detect something *common* in various experiences of oneself or others, it would not only be an inadequate representation of reality, but would have no resemblance or correspondence to it whatever: it would be a mere delusion to suppose that one mind could know anything whatever of another's mental state, or even of its own past states. Surely psychical states may resemble each other, and resemble in different degrees: M. Bergson would find it hard to refute Mr. Bradley's doctrine that resemblance = identity + difference. Still more unsuccessful does M. Bergson seem to me in his attempt to show that there is no quantity even in real 'duration' (duration as it is actually experienced). He is highly instructive in pointing out many mistakes which have originated in the transference to Time of the characteristics of Space: he is less convincing when he contends that Time and Space have nothing whatever in common: and that the application of the idea of Quantity to mental states arises not merely from a transference, but from an illegitimate transference of spatial ideas to the case of time. But this question is too large a one to be discussed here: suffice it to say that I admit it is only because we estimate a certain duration of a pleasure to be of equal value to a certain increase of intensity that we can intelligibly think of the interval between a degree of pleasure A and a degree B as being *as great* as that between B and C, and so speak of a greater or less sum of pleasure. Those who deny this ought to follow M. Bergson in denying that we can measure even the duration of pleasures.

[2] Of course from the merely hedonistic point of view.

soon have pleasure X raised to Y as pleasure C (lower down on the scale) raised to D, then I can intelligibly say that the difference between X and Y is equivalent to the difference between C and D. To take a concrete case: if a bank clerk is offered an addition of £50 a year to his salary or a diminution of his day's work by half an hour, and were, after consideration, conducted wholly on hedonistic grounds, to say 'I really don't care,' we should be entitled to say that the pleasure which he would obtain by the expenditure of £50—made up of course by an addition of the pleasure derived from so much better eating and drinking, so many more nights at the theatre, or from so many more books and a more enjoyable summer holiday—was the equivalent of the enjoyment which he would derive from 280 half-hours' leisure. It may be said that after all we have here only quantitative equality, not numerically defined inequality. But then it might be argued that the enjoyment of say 280 half-hours' leisure is made up of the pleasure derivable from the repetition 280 times of the enjoyment derivable from one half-hour's leisure. The amount of pleasure derived from an extra half-hour would of course in fact vary on different days; but he would expect a certain average of enjoyment on each day: and it would therefore be quite intelligible to say that the pleasure derived from £50 of additional income would be exactly 280 times the pleasure derivable on an average from half an hour's additional leisure. Once again it must be admitted there seems something rather childish in such calculations which are never made in practice—any more than we attempt to say by how many grains one heap of sand is bigger than another. Nevertheless, I maintain that in such cases the judgement is quantitative and might (so long as we confine ourselves to quite simple cases) intelligibly be reduced to numbers[1]. The fact that we can have a very decided and well-grounded opinion that one total is larger than the other total, while any attempt to express

[1] It may be suggested that in such calculations our thought becomes more and more abstract, and so leaves out elements of which in the concrete we really take account. This to a certain extent I admit; but then it must be remembered that all thought is abstract, and so leaves out elements of our actual perceptive experience.

our comparative estimate by numbers would be the wildest and most unprofitable guess-work, does not affect the question. The difficulties in the way of any exact mensuration of pleasures seem to me to be practical rather than theoretical. Some of these difficulties are too obvious to mention, but there is one which it may be well to notice, because it is, I believe, at the bottom of many people's objection to the whole idea of a sum of pleasures.

V

It is sometimes assumed that we cannot sum pleasure unless we suppose pleasure to be made up of a number of isolated pleasures, as though quantity were necessarily discrete. But space and time and everything that occupies space and everything that occupies time possess quantity, and yet space is not made up of points or time of moments. Pleasure, like time and space, is a continuum. In measuring things in space and time we have recourse to arbitrarily chosen units. And, in so far as we are taking account of the duration of pleasures merely, the units of time are applicable also to the case of pleasures; there is nothing essentially unmeaning in applying these units to the measurement of pleasures, and saying that a pleasure that lasts an hour is four times as great as one that lasts only for fifteen minutes. But such calculations are of little use to us, because as a rule we cannot assume that the same feelings, emotions, occupations or what not will continue to produce pleasure at the same rate for long periods which they produce for short periods. What interests us for five minutes would bore us in an hour; and conversely things which would interest us if we had an hour to give to them would awaken no interest in five minutes. There are books which we do not care to read for less than an hour and others which we should not care to read for so long. Duration, therefore, though an important element in the mensuration of pleasures, does not often practically help us much to an accurate measurement, even where we are dealing with the same external source of enjoyment: and, when we turn to the intensity of pleasures, the want of any satisfactory unit of pleasure is still more obvious. But the

difficulty of saying how many units of pleasure there are in a given lot or sum of pleasure does not prevent our arriving at a mental estimate of its quantity and comparing it with the quantity of other pleasures—just as an ignorant savage engaging to carry burdens across the Sahara may have very clear ideas of magnitude and weight without any knowledge of inches or pounds.

That we make such comparisons and pronounce which of two stretches of consciousness is the more pleasant on the whole, seems to be admitted by some who still object to the term 'sum of pleasures.' Such persons seem to mean that our estimate of the total pleasure that we shall get from one course of action as compared with what we shall get from another is arrived at without any previous mental addition or summing of pleasures. That we do not, as a rule, consciously divide up our prospective pleasure into units, and then do a sum in arithmetic, I have already admitted. But how we can arrive at an estimate of the amount of a whole without putting together a number of parts is to me unintelligible. When we are deciding in which of two ways we shall spend a day or a month devoted to recreation, do we not go over in imagination the various hours of the day or the probable occupations of the various days in a month, as it will be spent in each way, and make a rapid estimate (picturable in imagination, though not actually reduced to terms of any pleasure-unit) of the amount of pleasure which we shall get into each portion of it (though no doubt the portions are not necessarily marked off from each other by exact time-measurements), and then think which total is the largest? If any one tells me he is not conscious of doing so, I should be quite prepared to admit that he really makes such calculations in a less conscious and deliberate way than I am at times conscious of doing myself. Indeed, I believe that the disputes which have arisen on this subject are very largely traceable to differences between the mental habits of individuals; but the idea of a quantity—a quantity occupying time—which does not consist of parts, and is not made up of the addition of parts, will remain to most minds an unintelligible paradox. If it consists of parts, the parts must surely all be looked at before we can pronounce upon the

pleasurableness of the whole. Whether we can take in the whole quantity of pleasure by (as it were) a single mental glance, or whether we mentally run over the parts in succession, is a mere accidental difference of psychological habit. I am no less summing the number of sheep in a flock when (as may be done by an experienced shepherd) I pronounce how many they are by a look at the whole flock together than when I have laboriously to count them. Further, I am directly conscious that in estimating the total of pleasure I take into account the intensity of successive time-reaches as well as their duration; and this process can hardly be performed without thinking of the successive portions of time. If the whole time is likely to be equally pleasant, I may no doubt proceed at once to multiply (so to speak) intensity by duration: if the successive portions are likely to be very variable, I must surely think how much pleasure or pain there will be in each before I can say how much there will be in the whole. If such a process of estimating a total quantity after estimating the constituent quantities is not to be called addition and subtraction, I should be grateful to any Logician who will tell me more precisely what mental operation it is. At all events that is what I mean by summing pleasures. If anybody means the same thing but objects to the word, I can only say that I see no objection to it except the fact that it has been used by Hedonists, and that some people consider it necessary to object to everything which has been said by Hedonists: but the question of the word is of comparatively small importance. And if in the view of some of my readers I have not succeeded in hitting the exact point of their objection to the idea of a 'sum of pleasures,' I may be allowed to add that I have never yet met two persons who are exactly agreed as to the grounds of their anathema. And with some Philosophers, as with some Theologians, the anathema is the great thing: the grounds of it matter less.

One more of these objections may, however, demand a moment's notice. For some minds the objection to the notion of a sum of pleasures seems based upon the alleged impossibility of adding one man's pleasure to another's. It appears to be denied that two people's pleasure is *more* than the like pleasure

of one person. Of course it may be possible to find senses in which this might be the case. In the mind of those who make the objection, the summing of the pleasure of different persons seems to carry with it some suggestion that pleasure is a thing that can be actually separated from the consciousness of the person enjoying it, divided into lots, and handed about from one person to another. If any one has fallen into such a confusion, I venture to submit that it is the people who object to the mental addition of different people's pleasure, and not the people who contend for its possibility. The objection seems, in fact, to be little more than a question of words. The question whether two people's pleasure is not twice the like pleasure in one person's consciousness must depend on the purpose for which the addition is to be used. The meaning which I attach to the assertion is that I regard a certain amount of pleasure in two persons as twice as important as the same amount in one; and *ceteris paribus* I regard it as a duty to promote more pleasure rather than less pleasure. If this last proposition is to be denied, we have arrived at an ultimate difference of ethical ideal: if it be admitted, I do not see how duty is to be fulfilled without mentally multiplying the amount of pleasure by the number of persons enjoying that pleasure or (to avoid cavil) enjoying a like amount of pleasure. If this is admitted, where is the objection to the convenient phrase 'a sum of pleasure'?

VI

So far I have been dealing with the comparison of pleasures which are the same in kind—that is, as I understand it, in which the greater or less pleasurableness of the two pleasures is the only ground upon which we base our judgement as to their comparative preferability. Is the case altered when one pleasure is higher than another? It is impossible to answer the question without attempting to define what we mean by saying that one pleasure is higher than another. I have already endeavoured to show that, when we pronounce one pleasure higher than another, we mean that, though both of them are pleasant—it may be equally pleasant—the one is more valuable than the other for some other reason than its pleasantness. What I prefer is really

the superior moral or intellectual quality of the pleasant psychical state, not its superior pleasantness. If I compare them simply as pleasures, I make abstraction of all qualities in them except their pleasantness. And pleasure in the strict sense of the word—the abstract quality of pleasantness—can differ from pleasure only in quantity, extensive or intensive. Hence it appears that, strictly speaking, there is no difference in quality between pleasures considered simply as such, though there may be between pleasures in the popular sense of the word, i.e. there may be difference in intrinsic value between two states of consciousness equally pleasant. The distinction would be conveniently expressed by saying: 'Pleasure can be estimated only quantitatively, but pleasures may differ in kind'; or, 'Pleasures differ in kind, but not *qua* pleasures.' Some Philosophers who are not Hedonists may be prepared to deny that any distinction can be made between the value which things have as pleasure and the value which they have on other grounds, and to contend that our ethical judgement always refers simply to the ultimate value of a certain state of consciousness. Such a contention (to which I shall revert hereafter) would seem either (1) to bring back Hedonism under another name, or (2) to get rid of the idea of pleasure altogether. I am quite clear that in my own mind I make a distinction between the pleasantness of things and their value. As I understand the word 'pleasure,' the less pleasant of two states of consciousness sometimes presents itself to me as the more valuable[1].

When it is said (as it is by some, though I cannot point to any published expression of that view) that pleasures differ in kind *qua* pleasures, I do not know what can be meant by the doctrine unless it be the undoubted and important fact that the pleasurableness of a total state of mind is inseparably bound up with the value that it has on other grounds. It is not a mere accident that various states of mind to which we attribute higher value than other states of mind on account of their intrinsic worth do happen to be also pleasant. When I say that the contemplation of beauty seems to be good as well as pleasant, while the sensation derived from eating turtle-soup seems to me

[1] See below, p. 50 seq.

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pleasant but to possess a very low degree of goodness or ultimate value, I do not first form an estimate of the value which looking at the beautiful picture would have if it were not pleasant, and then add to it the additional value which it derives from being also pleasant. The pleasantness of the aesthetic gratification is an essential part of my conception of it. I do not know what beauty would be like if it were not a source of pleasure, or whether I should attribute any value to it at all if it were not essentially pleasant; and yet I am conscious that the pleasantness is not the sole source or measure of the value that I attach to it. All this seems to me perfectly true; and it goes to show that comparison between very heterogeneous pleasures simply in respect of their pleasantness is a very difficult and delicate proceeding. Fortunately it is for the most part useless and unnecessary, but not wholly so. It is often exceedingly difficult to say how much of the value we attribute to some occupation springs from its pleasantness, and how much from our sense of the value which it has on other grounds; and yet that is what we must do when we compare a higher and a lower pleasure simply as pleasures. And such comparisons, though difficult, can be made. I may say to myself in a certain mood: 'I should get more pleasure from going to this farce than I should from going to that tragedy'; and yet I may say to myself: 'The tragedy is the nobler and higher pleasure; therefore to the tragedy I will go.' On the other hand, if I were thinking only of amusement, and felt that in the circumstances it was right that I should think of pure amusement rather than of culture and aesthetic gratification, I might say: 'Though it is the lower pleasure, I will choose it.' I do not think it can be denied that we do not unfrequently go through such a process—sometimes for ourselves, more often in choosing pleasures for others. We should prefer to take a child to this elevating and aesthetic performance rather than to that somewhat vulgar pantomime, provided he will get a fair amount, though it may be a less amount, of pure amusement out of the former. But will he? We want to satisfy ourselves of this before we decide against the pantomime. Life is full of such problems, and however much we may insist on the difficulties of such comparisons, they have to be made and are made.

It is thus possible, though it is difficult, to compare heterogeneous pleasures simply in point of pleasantness. It is unnecessary to insist further on the difficulty or to analyse its causes more elaborately. But one very important practical consideration may be pointed out. It is difficult and frequently undesirable to compare very heterogeneous alternative pleasures simply from the point of view of their quantitative intensity, because to do so is to put oneself into a state of mind unfavourable to a due appreciation of the higher kind of pleasure even as pleasure. I may enjoy (say) a sermon by a great preacher and a light but amusing novel. The pleasures are very different pleasures; but, as both are pleasures, it must, I should contend, be possible to say which is the greater pleasure when there is any very considerable difference in the pleasantness. I am certainly conscious that I have derived more pleasure from some sermons than from some novels, and equally so that I have derived more pleasure from some novelists than from some preachers. But, if I propose to make the question whether I will go to church and hear the preacher or stay at home and read such and such a novel turn wholly on the question which will be most pleasant, if I deliberately put out of sight all the considerations other than love of pleasure which may draw me to the preacher's feet, I should be putting myself into a state of mind in which I should be very likely greatly to underestimate the amount of pleasure which I really should get, were I to throw aside the book and go to church. Nay, more, supposing me to decide for church on these grounds, and supposing this voluntarily adopted mood to continue, I should be very likely to miss the pleasure; for the pleasure in this case arises largely from the gratification of other desires than the desire for pleasure or for such kinds of pleasure as are common to the preacher and the novelist. These desires will *ex. hypothesi* be in a state of repression, whereas I shall have stimulated my appetite for those pleasures which the novel would supply in greater abundance than the sermon. Considerations like these may show the inadvisability of frequently permitting ourselves to make these purely hedonistic comparisons between very heterogeneous sources of enjoyment, but they do not disprove the

fact that the comparison can be, and in some cases must be, made.

The higher pleasure is, I have suggested, a pleasure to which we attribute value on other grounds than its mere pleasantness. The problem of the commensurability of pleasures has led us up to the more difficult and, ethically speaking, more important problem of the commensurability of goods. I have tried to show that it is possible to compare pleasures—no matter how heterogeneous—and to say which is pleasantest. But is it possible to compare heterogeneous *goods*—say, Virtue, Culture, and pleasure—and say which is *best*. It is possible, though it is not always right, to aim at a greatest attainable quantum of pleasure: is it possible to aim at the production of a greatest quantum of good? That such is a possible aim certainly seems to be implied by those who make the greatest good of society the criterion of conduct (and there are few Moralists of any school who have not used some such language), and yet refuse to interpret 'good' in the hedonistic sense. With this larger problem we shall be occupied in the following chapter.

But there is one last objection to the idea of a 'sum of pleasures' with which I will briefly deal before dismissing the subject. It is admitted by some (though once more I have to deal with a class of opponents whose modesty prevents them putting their views into a form in which they can be criticized) that we do 'prefer one lot of pleasures to another'; but it is said that we are not summing pleasures because the statement 'this amount of pleasure is greater than that' is merely a statement of our preference. We do not prefer the one alternative to the other because it contains more pleasure; it may be said to give more pleasure simply because we prefer it.

I reply: (1) My preference is not the same thing as my judgement that I shall get or have got more pleasure out of one set of experiences than out of another; for, though the expectation of pleasure may be the ground of my preference, I may make my preference turn on other grounds and prefer one course of action to another in spite of a clear judgement that it will yield less pleasure.

(2) My preference lies in the present, whereas the pleasure

lies in the past or the future. The present judgement is determined by the past or the anticipated experience, not *vice versa*. My preference for course *A* is based on my judgement that I shall get more pleasure from it, but it is not the same thing as that judgement. For I may prefer course *A* under the expectation that I shall get more pleasure from it than from course *B*, and find by bitter experience that I do not get the pleasure. The amount of pleasure which I shall actually get from an act of choice is not created by the act of choice, and is quite independent of my volition. It seems strange to find anti-hedonist and anti-sensationalist Philosophers confusing the act of choice with the judgement that the object chosen will be pleasant. If it be admitted that the future pleasure in any case or to any degree influences our choice, we must make such judgements before we choose; and since any duration of pleasure is made up of successive smaller durations, it is impossible to deny that the judgement as to its pleasurableness, and *pro tanto* its preferability, must depend upon our judgement as to the pleasurableness of these separate durations. How it is possible to be influenced by these many distinct judgements without putting them together, and how it is possible to put quantities together without a 'calculus,' the writers whom I have criticized have never succeeded in explaining.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMENSURABILITY OF ALL VALUES

I

In the last chapter I have endeavoured to defend the possibility of a hedonistic calculus. I maintained that it is psychologically possible to compare different lots of pleasure and to say which, on the whole, duration and intensity being both taken into account, is the greatest. If that be admitted, the fashioning of life in such a way as to attain either for oneself or for Society a greatest quantum of pleasure becomes a possible and intelligible ideal. It is possible to aim consistently at doing what will promote the greatest pleasure on the whole. But we have already seen reason to reject such a conception of the ethical end. The argument against Hedonism need not be repeated. Suffice it once more to remind the reader that, while I do regard pleasure as *a* good, I do not regard it as *the* good. It seems to me perfectly clear that the moral consciousness does pronounce some goods to be higher, or intrinsically more valuable than others; and that at the head of these goods comes Virtue, while many other things — intellectual cultivation and intellectual activity, aesthetic cultivation, emotion of various kinds — are also good and of more intrinsic value than mere pleasure. It is true that pleasure is an element in every state of consciousness to which we can assign ultimate value. I can attach no meaning whatever to the proposition, 'I find this picture supremely beautiful, and yet it gives me no pleasure to look at it.' Even with regard to Virtue, it is difficult to answer the question whether I should judge Virtue to possess value, if it gave me no sort of pleasure or satisfaction. The belief in *a priori* judgements of value must not be interpreted to mean that we can see what in detail is good for human beings

apart from the actual psychical and emotional constitution of human nature. If a being could exist (the very supposition doubtless involves an absurd abstraction) capable of appreciating the idea of duty, capable of willing that duty, and yet for ever by the very constitution of his nature incapable of deriving the smallest amount of pleasure or satisfaction from the performance of duty by himself or another, I do not know that I should attach any meaning to the assertion 'Virtue to such a being or in such a being is a good.' Another person might no doubt regard such a being's Virtue as a good, but then he would judge also that the other person ought to derive pleasure or satisfaction from his goodness: he would hold that it was a good inasmuch as it ought to exist, but he would hardly think that the man himself had attained even that good which consists in being truly virtuous. Pleasure is an element in everything to which we attach value: and yet we do not attach value to consciousness *in proportion to* its pleasantness: pleasures differ in kind or quality. And as I endeavoured to show in the last chapter, this amounts to the assertion that something else in consciousness possesses value besides its pleasantness: there are other goods besides pleasure. On what principle then are we to choose between these different kinds of good? It is to my mind a perfectly clear deliverance of the moral consciousness, that no action can be right except in so far as it tends to produce a good, and that, when we have to choose between goods, it is always right to choose the greater good. Such a doctrine implies that goods of all kinds can be compared, that we can place goods of all kinds on a single scale, and assign to each its value relatively to the rest. The defence of this assumption is the object of the present chapter.

In the first place I must begin by distinguishing between two different senses in which it may be asserted that goods of different kinds are commensurable. It may mean that a certain amount of one good can be regarded as a sufficient and satisfactory substitute for the other, so that, however much superior Virtue may be to Culture, a sufficient amount of Culture could be regarded as an entirely satisfactory compensation for the absence of all Virtue: that, given enough sensual pleasure, the

absence of either Virtue or Culture would cease to be an object of regret. If this were the only possible meaning of the commensurability of heterogeneous goods, I should fully sympathize with the assertion that the value of the higher goods (particularly of Virtue) is incommensurable with that of anything else. But that is not the only possible meaning of our assertion. It may mean only that, when we have to choose between a higher and a lower good—*when we cannot have both*—we can compare them, and pronounce that one possesses more value than the other.

And this is the only possible interpretation of the formula which is open to those who hold that no one of the competing goods, not even Virtue, is by itself *the* good. The true good of a human life does not consist either in Virtue only, or in knowledge only, or in pleasure only. I altogether decline to pronounce εὐδαίμων, or in the highest possible degree 'blessed,' a man who has enjoyed twenty years of unbroken Virtue in a loathsome dungeon, cut off from books or human society, and afflicted by perpetual toothache or a succession of other tortures. Such a man has not attained the true end of his being. He may be much more blessed than the successful sinner, but his lot cannot be pronounced a wholly desirable one; he is blessed for his goodness, but he is not altogether blessed. Equally little would any abundance and variety of sensual pleasures make me attach high value to the life of a stupid sensualist; nor will any amount of refinement or intellectual enjoyment induce me to regard as supremely desirable the life of a Borgia or even a Goethe. No amount of one kind of good can compensate for the absence or deficiency of the other. But when circumstances make it impossible for me to secure for myself or for others all these kinds of good, then I can and must decide which of them I regard as best worth having; and that implies that *for the purpose of choosing between them* they are commensurable.

It is quite true, as will be indignantly protested in some quarters, that each of these 'goods' taken by itself is an abstraction. No one of them can exist wholly without the other, or at least without the opposite of the other. Pleasure cannot exist—at least for a human being—without some kind or measure of

knowledge or intellectual activity. Knowledge can hardly be supposed ever to be accompanied by no kind or sort of pleasure, though the pleasure may in some cases be greatly outweighed by attendant pains.

And, if you stripped off from a human being all activity of thought (even that implied in the most mechanical occupation or the most humdrum routine of duty), and all feeling of satisfaction in one thing rather than another, it would be difficult to see wherein the Virtue of such a being could consist. It is not upon each one of these things taken by itself that we pronounce our judgements of value, but upon each of them taken as an element in a whole[1]. Our ideal of human life is not a certain amount of the higher goods mechanically added on to a certain amount of lower goods, but a connected whole in which each is made different by its connexion with the others. It is not Virtue + knowledge + pleasure that we desire for a man—a waking day, for instance, in which seven hours are devoted to Virtue, six to knowledge, and four to pleasure—but that he may be virtuous and find pleasure in his virtuous activities; that he may study and derive pleasure from his studies; that he may enjoy the pleasures of eating and drinking, but enjoy them in such a manner and degree as may be conducive to the development of his higher nature, and consistent with the highest good of his fellows. But, when through unfavourable circumstances this ideal is not realizable, we can surely distinguish between the various elements in a human life and form a judgement as to which of them seems to be more important—a large amount of this, or a small amount of that. If we were not thus

[1] It is equally true that we could not pronounce on their value as elements in a whole unless we found a value at least in some one of them taken separately, just as we could not find a picture beautiful unless blue, red, and green were found beautiful in themselves, though the aesthetic value of the colours may be enormously enhanced or (in the case of unpleasing contrast) diminished by the combination. Just so pleasure is a good taken by itself, but it may cease to be so if by its excess it spoils the true proportion of higher and lower goods in our life. Mr. Moore's remark that the value of two goods in combination may be very different from the combined value of each taken separately (*Principia Ethica*, p. 214) is a new and striking way of stating a very old truth.

capable of distinguishing between various elements in human life[1], all thinking or talking about the moral ideal, or indeed about practical aims or objects of any kind, would be estopped. And if, when we have distinguished them, we are not to say which of them is best and to act upon our answer, there is an end to the possibility of any ethical system which admits that the morality of an action depends upon its consequences. The latter admission is now generally made by the most anti-hedonistic writers. There is a general consensus that Ethics must be 'teleological,' though not hedonistic. And this admission seems inevitably to carry with it the further concession that all values must be, in the sense defined, commensurable. If the morality of an act depends upon the value of all its consequences taken together, we must be able to say which of two sets of consequences possesses the more value; and, if different kinds of consequence are to have any weight assigned to them, we must be able to attribute more or less weight to each of them. To deny this seems to amount to the denial that there is any one fixed and consistent meaning in the word 'value' or 'worth' or 'good,' and to make impossible any system of Ethics which is based upon this conception.

II

The only way of escaping the admission that different kinds of good are commensurable would be to assert that it is always right to choose the highest. Now (if we assume that Virtue is the highest of goods) this contention involves all the difficulties of the formalistic Ethics (to use Prof. Paulsen's term) of Kant and his stricter disciples. If nothing in the world possesses value except the good will, we cut ourselves off from the possibility of assigning a rational ground for regarding one volition as better than another. To repeat once more the stock criticism,

[1] It is true, of course, as has been admitted above, that we never get one element *wholly* apart from the other. The greediest *bon-vivant*, with his attention wholly concentrated on his food, is thinking of something, and the student absorbed in his books may be enjoying the carnal pleasure of sitting in a comfortable chair, but we may make abstraction of these things sufficiently to ask 'Which is best—eating or study?'

a will that wills nothing but itself has no content. The term 'right' is meaningless except in reference to the good. The good will may possess infinitely more value than any consequence that it wills; but, unless that consequence be good, the will cannot be good either. Charity is no doubt better than the eating of food by hungry persons, but unless that eating be good, there is no reason for applying the word 'right' or 'good' to the charitable act. To deny that anything possesses value but a good will (which Kant after all did not do) is to deny that such a thing as a good will is possible. The attempt may, indeed, be made to escape the force of this criticism by pleading that it is only where some lower good is incompatible with the higher that it must be treated as possessing no value at all. But, in the first place, it seems difficult to escape the admission that, even when we assign some value to the lower and a value to the higher which always overweighs any conceivable amount of the former, we are in a sense treating them as commensurable: we do in a sense measure the value of the one against the other, even when we pronounce that their values are related as finite quantities are related to infinity. But the question arises whether we do always pronounce that the smallest quantity of the higher is worth more than the largest quantity of the lower. And here of course the appeal can only be to the actual moral judgements of mankind.

So long as I confine myself to my own Virtue, it seems clear that it can never be right for me to prefer any quantity of a lower good to the doing of my own duty. And if goodness, Morality, a rightly directed will, be the thing of highest value in the world, I shall always be choosing the greatest good for myself by doing my duty. If in any case it is right or reasonable for me to choose a lower good rather than a higher one, then *eo ipso* I shall not be violating my duty by pursuing it, and therefore I shall not be postponing my own Morality to anything which is not Morality. The principle that all values are commensurable can never in practice bring the morality of any individual into competition with any other good, so long as his own voluntary acts alone are concerned. It can never compel us to say, 'For an adequate quantity of some other good it is

reasonable for me to commit a sin.' So much results from a mere analysis of the idea of duty.

But can we say that there are no cases in which we have, in judging of the effect of our conduct upon others, to institute comparisons between the intrinsic worth of goodness and the intrinsic worth of other and lower goods—knowledge, culture, bodily pleasure, immunity from pain? Can we say that it is always right to regard the very smallest amount of moral good—in that sense of moral good in which one man's goodness may be increased and diminished by the act of another—as preferable to the utmost conceivable quantity of any lower good? It seems to me that to maintain that such is always our duty would involve an austerity or rigorism by which few would even pretend to guide their judgements of conduct outside the pages of an ethical treatise. Take the case contemplated by Cardinal Newman. Cardinal Newman, in defending himself against the charge of depreciating Veracity because lying is only, according to Roman Catholic Moral Theology, a venial sin, has laid it down that it would be better for millions of the human race to expire in extremest agony than for a single human soul to be guilty of the slightest venial sin. Mr. Lecky has declined to endorse this tremendous judgement[1]. And, I believe, few who in the least realize the meaning of the words which they are using would do so either. And what does this mean but that we judge that a little Morality (so far as Morality may be the result of another's conduct) possesses less value than an immense quantity of pleasure or the prevention of a vast amount of pain—that it is from the point of view of Reason more important that so many thousand people should not suffer torments than that one man should not commit a small sin?

It will perhaps be objected that such an alternative could never be presented; but such a contention would, it seems to me, betray an extraordinary blindness to some of the most difficult practical problems with which we are confronted every day of our lives. I have a limited sum of money to spend on charity. I believe that spiritual good can be promoted by efficient Curates, that intellectual good can be promoted by education, and that

[1] *Hist. of European Morals* (1877), I, p. 111.

pain can be saved by hospitals. Shall I give it to an Additional Curates Society, or to education, or to a hospital? I have a son who wishes to enter the Civil Service of India. Shall I send him to a 'crammer's,' which (in his particular case) may give him the best chance of getting in, or to a Public School and University, which will be best for his moral and intellectual well-being? A problem more exactly resembling the hypothetical case propounded by Newman arises when some great material benefit can only be obtained by the bribery of an official. Few people would hesitate to bribe a Chinese Mandarin to be unfaithful to his superiors, a traitor to his country, disloyal very possibly to his own highest ideal (which may enjoin relentless hostility to foreigners) in order to set free a score or so of Europeans who would otherwise be exposed to torture and death. By such an act a man would distinctly be causing a small amount of moral evil in order to produce a large amount of hedonistic good.

Such an admission could only be escaped if we were to adopt the extravagant position sometimes taken up by extreme Libertarians—the position that the virtue of one man can never be increased or diminished by the action of another. The admission that in some cases it is right to prefer a larger amount of lower good to a smaller amount of a higher in no way involves, be it observed, the principle 'to do a great right do a little wrong.' The individual must himself always do right: the moral evil that he causes is not even a little wrong in him, if (as the view I am defending maintains) it is right for him to cause in another that little moral evil rather than be the cause of an immense amount of undeserved physical suffering. And I fail to see how moral judgements which would in practice be assented to and acted upon by the holiest of mankind can be explained or justified upon any other view.

There are, I must freely admit, very many more cases in which I am certain that the accepted morality of our time and country implies such a preference of much lower to a little higher good than there are cases in which I am certain that such a preference is really justifiable. We compel large masses of young men to remain unmarried, well knowing the moral consequences which are likely to ensue from such a state of

things, because we hold that the country must be defended and that it would be too expensive to allow all soldiers to marry. We allow the children of the working classes to be withdrawn from school at the age of twelve or thirteen, though no one doubts that they would benefit morally and intellectually by staying till sixteen, because we think it would be too great a strain upon the resources of the country and of the individual parents—here, now, for the moment, under existing social and economic conditions—to compel them to keep their children at school any longer. In other words, we hold the enjoyment of luxuries by rich taxpayers, of Culture by the educated, of comforts by poor taxpayers, of the necessaries of life by poor parents to be of more intrinsic importance than the higher moral and intellectual advancement of the children. I need not pursue such illustrations further. There is, in fact, no single expenditure of money—public or private—upon material enjoyment which goes beyond the bare necessaries of life which can justify itself upon the theory that it is never right to promote lower good when we could promote ever so little of some higher good [1].

It is quite true, and it is important to remember, that the opposition between higher and lower good is seldom so absolute as has been here assumed. It is seldom, in such practical problems, that all the higher good is on one side and all the lower good on the other. When we insist that, given certain circumstances, the claims of national defence must take precedence of education, and even of certain branches of personal Morality (in so far as Morality can be promoted or hindered by external influences), we may plead that we attach importance to national defence, not only in the interests of commerce and material well-being but in the interests of national independence, national character, and international Morality. When we refuse

[1] 'If we ask whether I ought always to choose to slightly elevate another person's ideals, at the cost of great suffering to him, or if I ought always to choose to slightly elevate my own ideals, at the cost of great suffering to some one else, it becomes clear that happiness and development are ethically commensurable, and that we have no right to treat a loss of either as ethically indifferent' (McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 122). It will be seen from what follows (p. 47) that it is only in a very restricted sense that I should admit that the second possibility can ever arise.

to burden poor parents beyond a certain point for the education of their children, it may be suggested that further pressure would involve the semi-starvation of the children, which would not be ultimately in the interests of their moral and intellectual Well-being. And, more generally, we may contend that a certain indulgence of the lower appetites and desires of human nature—an indulgence going considerably beyond the paramount requirements of health—is in average men more conducive to moral Well-being than a semi-compulsory asceticism with the inevitable reaction which such asceticism is apt to provoke. All this is very true; but still we cannot, as it seems to me, avoid the admission that in some cases the balance of moral good is on one side, and that of lower good on the other. Give that bribe, and the moral character of your Mandarin will have taken a downward turn: withhold it and twenty European men, women, and children will die in torture and dishonour. It is only a fanatic to whom the small deterioration of one Mandarin, *ex hypothesi* not a character of the highest order, will seem a more valuable end than the saving of twenty European lives with all their possibilities of happiness. It may be said that there are possibilities of goodness also. Then let us suppose that death is unavoidable, and that it is only a question of torture. No doubt the prevention of injustice may have good moral effects. But all these are vague possibilities as contrasted with the certain moral evil of corrupting the Mandarin with all the incidental moral effects which that corruption may carry with it. Our moral judgement is not really determined by these speculative possibilities. We really think it more important to spare so much suffering than to avoid the slight deterioration of one Mandarin's character.

For the agent himself it can never, we have admitted, be right to prefer his own lower to his own higher good, for the simple reason that to do right is always his own highest good. And yet, even in considering one's own moral good, there may be cases in which it may be right, just in order to do one's duty, to adopt a course of action which may be likely on the whole to have an injurious effect on one's own character, in that sense of character in which a man is made better or worse by influences

not under the immediate control of his own will. It may sometimes be right for a man to adopt a profession which in the long run may have a lowering effect upon his ideals and upon his conduct, in preference to one which would be likely to have a more elevating influence; or in innumerable other ways to face temptations which he does not know that he will always be able to resist rather than to purchase his own moral purity at the cost of other people's Well-being. Our own future Well-being, in so far as it lies beyond our own immediate control, is in the same position as other people's moral Well-being—to be weighed against the other kinds of good, and assigned a value which, though enormously transcending that of lower goods, cannot be held to be absolutely incommensurable with them. But still, this admission does not involve any abandonment of our previous contention—that it can never be right for a man to do an immediately wrong act for the sake of any other advantage to himself or others. By choosing the greater good, he has done his duty (even in choosing a course which may in the long run react in some ways unfavourably upon his own character), and by doing his duty he has chosen the greatest good for himself. He would have become a worse man by taking the opposite course. Paradox as it may seem, he would have become a less moral man on the whole by attaching too high a value to his own Morality. In reality he is only preferring one element in his own moral good to another—a higher element to a lower—since the preference of the greatest good is itself the highest Morality.

III

So far, we have been comparing the value of Morality or character with that of all other goods. When we come to the weighing of higher goods other than the highest—of intellectual and aesthetic goods for instance—against the lower, there will be perhaps less objection to admit that a small amount of the higher may sometimes have to give way to a large amount of the lower. At all events the task of showing that this is the principle upon which ordinary good men act is here an easy one. Some of the instances already given will serve to illustrate this

case also—the sacrifice of education to health and comfort, the spending of national money upon armies and guns instead of Universities, libraries, and scientific expeditions, the cutting down of the British Museum grant in the interest of the South African War. However much we may regret and condemn the indifference which our own Parliaments and Governments (more than any other Parliaments and Governments in the civilized world) show to such intellectual objects, few of us would be prepared to push the expenditure of public moneys upon them to a point which would on the material side lower the general standard of comfort to the level of bare health and subsistence. And here there will be little scruple in admitting that it is not merely in conduct affecting others but in conduct affecting primarily only ourselves that we act, and feel that we do right in acting, upon the principle that the quantity as well as the quality of various heterogeneous goods must be taken into account in choosing between them. We feel that Art is higher than comfort and good eating, but we do not feel bound to lower our standard of comfort below a certain point in order to buy books and pictures. We recognize that study is intrinsically more valuable than ordinary conversation, but we feel justified in spending on the enjoyment of society a considerable amount of time which might be spent upon study. We acknowledge the claim of Culture, but we do not feel bound to pursue Culture when it would interfere beyond a certain point with health and comfort and the ordinary enjoyment of life—an enjoyment consisting in the following out of natural tastes and inclinations which, however harmless, we cannot upon reflection pronounce to have a very high intrinsic value. We may admit on reflection that we do not care for and pursue our own intellectual improvement as much as we ought to do; but in our most serious moments of self-examination we hold that it is sometimes lawful to spend half an hour upon some lower amusement without proving that the giving up of that amusement would injuriously affect our health or cause some other evil than the mere loss of the amusement. In such cases there is, indeed, no great disproportion between the amount of the higher and of the lower goods. If we think of cases where the dis-

proportion would be very great, the verdict of the practical Reason will be still more unhesitating. If we had to weigh the sufferings of some thousand tortured rabbits against the purely intellectual gain of some theoretically unimportant and practically unfruitful piece of scientific knowledge[1], or a woman's heart broken and her life wrecked against the scientific or aesthetic advantage to a Philosopher or a Novelist in being enabled the better to analyse the passion of love—in cases like these there will be little doubt what the verdict will be on the part of any person of common humanity not sophisticated by the gospel of Self-realization.

All these judgements then imply that we do actually weigh very heterogeneous goods against one another, and decide which possesses most value, and in making that estimate we do take into consideration the amount of the two kinds of good as well as the quality. We do hold that a little of some higher good is too dearly bought by a great sacrifice of some lower good, and, on the other hand, that a very small quantity of one good is sometimes worth a great deal of another. If a facetious opponent forthwith challenges us to produce a graduated table of goods, a tariff by reference to which we may at once say how much headache ought to outweigh the Culture implied in the reading of a Shakespearean play or the like, the answer is the one which the opponent will probably urge against the whole scheme—that there are no means of measuring with exactitude such things as Culture or Charity, and, again, that the value of a 'good' is relative to many circumstances. The reading of a play of Shakespeare may be an intellectual revolution—the beginning of a new intellectual and (it may be) moral life to one man, while to another it will be of less value than the same number of pages of Miss Marie Corelli. But, as I have so often had occasion to point out, the impossibility of reducing to numerical precision judgements of this kind does not imply that the judgements are not made, or that they are not quantitative. It is only in quite recent times that mechanical methods have been invented for instituting exact comparisons between lights of

[1] I have nothing to say against Vivisection duly regulated in the interests of Humanity.

different strength[1]: yet, long before such methods were invented, men judged that one light was stronger — much stronger, moderately stronger, or a little stronger—than another light, and acted on their judgements. A little ingenuity might perhaps find cases in which we could with some meaning say that one higher good possessed twice the intrinsic value possessed by another. But I have admitted that even in comparing pleasures, and pleasures of the same order, such exact measurements are rarely possible and never of use. It is a characteristic of these higher goods that their value, or rather the value of goods springing from the same objective source, varies with circumstances more even than is the case with simple physical pleasures and pains. And therefore here the attempt to find cases in which such a mensuration might have a meaning is too far removed from anything which actually takes place in our practical life to be worth attempting, even by way of playfully illustrating the quantitative character of these judgements.

IV

There is one really formidable objection to the position taken up in this and the last chapter which I must attempt briefly to meet. Among those who strongly hold that all goods can be compared, that 'value' must always have the same meaning, and that the true way of deciding between two alternative courses of action is to ask, 'By doing which shall I produce good of most value?' there are some who will object to the distinction which has here been drawn between pleasure-value and value of a higher kind. It has been assumed that we sometimes say, 'This course will produce the most pleasure, but the pleasure is not sufficient to outweigh the evil of another kind which is involved in it: the course which produces least pleasure will produce most good.' But it may be urged that if we are really to be faithful to our doctrine that all values are comparable, we must refuse to recognize more than one kind of value: and that if we reject the doctrine that pleasure is the only thing that has value, we cannot really compare states of con-

[1] Even here the comparison is only made by the aid of an assumption which perhaps cannot be strictly defended. Cf. above, p. 25.

sciousness as pleasures, and then override that judgement by a second valuation of them as goods. 'The ideal or rational standard of comparison,' it may be urged, 'is the only one. Whether it is pleasure or Culture or Morality that we are comparing, all that we can do is to say which appears to us to be worth most.' I have some sympathy with the spirit in which this objection is made. For I freely confess that I find it impossible either to get hold of a satisfactory definition of pleasure or to distinguish in any sharp or scientific way between pleasure-value and that higher kind of value which, though doubtless normally accompanied by more or less pleasure, is not (for the developed moral consciousness) measured in terms of pleasure. It would be easy to show how wildly wide of the mark are most of the definitions of pleasure which have been put forth by eminent authorities. After each of them one exclaims, 'Well, whatever I mean by pleasure, it is certainly not that.' And yet I cannot readily bring myself to believe that pleasure is simply a *vox nihili*; for nothing less than that would be the logical consequence of saying, 'Pleasure is neither identical with value nor one of the things which possess value: we can compare values, but we cannot compare pleasures.' It might be possible for an ascetic to say, 'I know what pleasure is, but it has no value': but those who hold the view which I am criticizing are not ascetics. They do attribute value to pleasant things. The value of some things is not measured by their pleasantness, but the value of other things surely does cease to exist when they cease to be pleasant. We must, therefore, be able to estimate their pleasantness before we can pronounce upon their value, and compare that value with the value of things which do not owe their value entirely to their pleasantness. It has been fully and frankly admitted that pleasure is an abstraction, that it is one particular aspect of consciousness; but it is not the only one. Now I do not think it possible to define what this aspect is sufficiently to mark it off with absolute precision from those other aspects which we have in view in pronouncing upon the absolute or ultimate value of some state of consciousness. And yet it is certain that it does represent one of the aspects under which we are practically in the habit of considering and valuing such states.

I tremble at the thought of putting forth a new definition of pleasure, and protest that what follows is not intended as such: but I venture to suggest that, when we try to estimate the value of a state of consciousness as pleasure, we are thinking of its value simply as immediate feeling, abstracting as much as possible from all reference to the other parts of our nature. Our appreciation of the value of duty does not depend *merely* upon the immediate feeling that accompanies the doing of duty: to hold that is the 'moral sense' view of the matter which (as Hume has shown once for all), when fully thought out, ends in Hedonism. It depends upon our appreciation of the relation between this present consciousness of ours and our own past and future, upon our consciousness of our relation as persons to other persons, upon the presence of all sorts of desires and aspirations which go beyond the moment—beyond even our own consciousness at all. The same may be applied in a modified degree to the value which we find in intellectual or aesthetic cultivation. All these things are put aside when we estimate our consciousness simply as present feeling. This is most clearly seen in the case of those conscious states which have no value except what they possess simply as so much pleasant feeling. If we found that the drinking of a certain liquid not required for purposes of health was not satisfactory simply in and for itself, we should pronounce it to have no value at all. It would be easy and tempting to essay a definition of pleasure by making it consist in the satisfaction of our lower as distinct from the satisfaction of our higher desires. But this will not express what we really mean by pleasure. For pleasure is clearly something which the lower sources of satisfaction have in common with the higher. When we compare the glow of satisfaction which *sometimes* attends a conquest over temptation, we feel at once that the resulting feeling has something in common with the state of mind into which we are put on other occasions by a cup of tea.

It is this something which we seek to indicate by the term pleasure. And yet I do not feel that the value of that good will of ours is wholly dependent upon the satisfactoriness of the present feeling, or of any future succession of such feelings. Apart from that, we judge that the good will has value; and,

indeed, it is this recognition of its value which is the cause, or at least one condition of the pleasure—quite otherwise than in the case of the tea; *there* we cannot say what value it has till we try it, and, if we do not like the feeling, it has no value at all. To the man who desires goodness, or cares about doing his duty, the doing of it must bring some pleasure, for there is pleasure in the satisfaction of all desire; and it would be (as I have admitted) meaningless to ask whether we should attach value to Morality for a being who was for ever incapable of feeling, or being brought to feel, any such satisfaction in good conduct. But we can equally little assert that the value of the good act depends upon the amount of the resulting pleasure. For, while a good act must bring pleasure to him who has any sense of its value, the amount of the pleasure is dependent upon very many other things than the amount of the good will—upon health, temperament, spirits, surrounding circumstances of all kinds. But these variations in the actual pleasantness of the good will exercise no influence upon our estimate of the higher value which goodness possesses as compared with the drinking of good wine. And we judge that those who do not experience this pleasantness at all, whatever other pleasures they enjoy, are in a state of mind which we cannot wholly approve. They *ought* to feel this pleasure. We hold that goodness has a pleasure-value which may be compared with the pleasure-value of champagne, which may sometimes exceed and sometimes fall short of that value, but that it possesses besides a value of its own which it does not share with the champagne. We are brought back at last to the simple fact of consciousness. The only way of defending the possibility of a judgement, or the existence of a category, is to show that we do actually think in that way; and it is clear to me that each of the three attempts—(1) to analyse all value into pleasure-value, or (2) to merge pleasure-value into value in general, or (3) to deny that sometimes we are driven to compare pleasure-value with some higher kind of value—fails to represent the actual verdict of our moral consciousness.

If the view which we have taken of the relation in which the idea of pleasure stands to the idea of value be well founded, it

will be obvious why, from the nature of the case, no very sharp distinction can be drawn between them. Among the things to which we attach value, some appeal so entirely to the higher or rational part of our nature that, except for the bare fact that they do satisfy desire, they seem to have nothing in common with the lower. When a man does his duty at the cost of toil and suffering, it is so exclusively the higher part of his nature that impels him to the sacrifice that we should feel it unnatural to say that it is the pleasure to which he attaches so high a value. This higher nature of his is, indeed, so closely connected with his lower that it is impossible that the satisfaction of that higher impulse can fail to excite some pleasant feeling, but it is not valued simply as feeling. On the other hand, the mere 'prick of sense' ceases to have value when it ceases to give pleasure. The vast majority of those states of consciousness to which we attach value are intermediate between the two cases. They appeal to our higher and to our lower nature at the same time. The performance of duty, even at the sacrifice of much that under other circumstances would be valued, the activity of our intellect in an interesting profession or an interesting study, social intercourse with those whom we really care for—all these under favourable circumstances are accompanied by feeling of a kind which has much in common with the feeling that one gets from bathing or basking in the sunshine. They appeal to the higher and to the lower part of our nature at one and the same time. It would be ridiculous to talk as if we valued them simply as pleasures; for, when, through unfavourable circumstances or interfering unpleasantness, they practically cease to appeal to the lower nature at all, we value them still. It would be equally impossible to pronounce that our judgement of their value is wholly independent of that which they have in common with the merely animal satisfactions. In these cases it is practically impossible to say how much of the value is due to one source and how much to the other. If we supposed the lower side of this satisfactoriness progressively diminished, it would be virtually impossible to say exactly when we had reached the point at which we had ceased to prefer them as pleasant states of mind, and begun to prefer them only as states of

mind which we value apart from their pleasurableness. It is only when we attempt by a deliberate effort of abstraction to compare the higher and the lower from the same point of view —the point of view of immediate feeling—that we do actually distinguish between the value of our mental condition on the whole and its value as pleasure. And such efforts, being seldom useful, are seldom made. It is only when the higher and the lower elements of interest get violently separated—when the value which some object of desire has for us as rational and reflecting beings gets very far removed from the value which it has for us as sensitive beings[1], that it becomes natural to say, 'We prefer this to that, but we do not prefer it simply as pleasure.'

It is probable that in practice different people use this term 'pleasure' with considerable differences of meaning. Some people, even among Philosophers, seem to be unable to dissociate the term pleasure from bodily indulgences: while the existence of high-minded Hedonists seems to show that others really use it almost or entirely in the sense of 'intrinsically valuable consciousness.'

On the whole, then, it is clear to me that we cannot do without this distinction between value and pleasure. To merge the idea of value in that of pleasure practically involves all the fallacies of Hedonism; to merge the idea of pleasure in that of value involves the refusal to distinguish different elements in the supremely valuable kind of conscious life which the moral consciousness undoubtedly does distinguish. Practically we cannot get on without both the idea of value and that of pleasure. Yet it may be admitted that the idea of value belongs to the language of strict philosophical thought, the idea of pleasure rather to the region of those popular conceptions which the Philosopher must take account of, which he is bound to use but which are from their very nature incapable of exact definition, and which, therefore, must necessarily be used without exact scientific precision. We want a term to express the something which is common to the higher and the lower of those states of consciousness in which we recognize value: but, just because higher and lower shade off into one another, pleasure

[1] Of course we are never in reality *merely* sensitive.

must needs shade off into something that is not pleasure, or at all events not mere pleasure. We may speak of pleasure as the value which feeling possesses simply as feeling; yet, just because feeling does not exist apart from the other elements in consciousness, but is one aspect of an indivisible reality—the thinking, feeling, willing self—it is impossible sharply to distinguish the value which we attach to consciousness simply as feeling from the value which we attach to it because it satisfies our rational nature: for the lower kind of satisfaction often depends upon and arises from our consciousness of the highest kind of value. Enthusiasm for an idea—religious or other—may produce some of the emotional, even some of the physical, effects of the keenest sensuous enjoyment. It will no doubt be urged that Philosophy has nothing to do with such a vague and indefinable conception; but a Philosophy which fails to take account of the vague and inadequate language in which alone it is possible to express our moral experience must be a Philosophy which deliberately refuses to deal with one side—and that the most important and fundamental side—of that spiritual experience in which Reality consists. It is all very well to protest against abstractions, but without abstractions there is no thought. A Philosophy that would avoid abstractions must be speechless: and the Moral Philosophy of some of my friends would seem to be practically speechless, except in so far as it indulges in splenetic outbursts of abuse or contempt against those who humbly endeavour to put their ethical views into intelligible words. It is right no doubt to protest against 'one-sided abstractions'; but every abstraction must be one-sided while it is actually being made. The only way to neutralize the abstraction involved in looking at one side of a thing apart from the other side is to look at the other side also at another time. I trust that in contending for the indispensability of the distinction between the pleasure-aspect and other aspects of consciousness, and in contending that both have value, though one has a higher value than the other, I have not violated this doubtless important principle. The ideal end of life does not consist in a mere aggregate of goods piled together without mutual influence or interaction upon one another. No one

of them indeed can be enjoyed or can exist in absolute isolation from the other. And yet the nature of this ideal can only be indicated for thought and for language by describing it as a whole made up of distinguishable elements—a good made up of an hierarchy [1] or ascending scale of goods.

V

There is another concept which seems to demand a brief treatment in this connexion—that of happiness. If we repudiate the hedonistic identification of pleasure and happiness, what account, it may be asked, are we to give of the latter? If we regard pleasure as part, though not the whole, of the life that has supreme value, is not this last, it may be suggested, very much what we mean by happiness? If we attempt (apart altogether from theory) to analyse what as a matter of fact we commonly mean when we talk of happiness, the answer will, I think, be something of this kind. Happiness represents satisfaction with one's existence as a whole—with the past and the future as well as with the immediate present. Happiness certainly cannot be identified with pleasure, not even with the higher or more refined kinds of pleasure. It is possible to get an enormous amount of pleasure into one's life—of pleasures that are recognized as having a value and even a high value—and yet to be on the whole unhappy through the presence of desires which are unsatisfied, dissatisfaction with the past [2], anxiety as to the future, unfulfilled aspirations, baffled hopes and the like [3]. It

[1] Cf. the great Theologian Albrecht Ritschl's conception of the Kingdom of God: 'The task of the Kingdom of God . . . includes likewise all labour in which our lordship over nature is exercised for the maintenance, ordering, and furtherance even of the bodily side of human life. For unless activities such as these are ultimately to end in anti-social egoism, or in a materialistic overestimate of their immediate results, they must be judged in the light of those ends which, in ascending series, represent the social, spiritual, and moral ideal of man' (*The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, Eng. Trans., 1900, p. 612).

[2] Thus St. Augustine holds that 'perfecta beatitudo' is impossible in this life on account of the moral failures of the past and the present.

[3] This distinction between happiness and pleasure is no doubt present to the minds of those who make the end of life to be satisfaction of a 'timeless

is possible to endure a considerable amount of hardship, of positive pain both bodily and mental, and yet to be on the whole happy; though we should certainly say that the removal or mitigation of those pains would add to the happiness even of those who are most 'self-sufficient for happiness.'

There is therefore a difference between happiness and pleasure. And yet it is impossible without paradox to dissociate the idea of happiness altogether from that of pleasure. A happy life must include some pleasure: all happiness is pleasurable, though not all pleasure is happiness. The pleasure which is an essential part of happiness is no doubt pleasure of the kind which is most dependent upon the man himself and least dependent upon circumstances—the kind of pleasure which, as Aristotle contended, the higher activities necessarily bring with them. But happiness is by no means altogether independent of external circumstances: there must, as Aristotle puts it, be that unimpeded exercise of the higher faculties which is very much dependent upon circumstances. Happiness depends largely upon health, upon suitable work, upon a congenial marriage: and these are emphatically things which are not in our own power. It is true that some kinds of ill health or of uncongenial environment are in some men compatible with a considerable measure of happiness; and the people who are most capable of such happiness are, no doubt, on the whole the best men. But nobody would

self.' But, apart from other objections, happiness, though it is distinguished from pleasure (*a*) by being commonly attributed only to some considerable period of a man's life and (*b*) by involving the satisfaction of desires which 'look before and after,' the satisfaction of the more permanent and dominant aims and desires of a man's life, is still emphatically something in time. Some people, it is probable, would say that parts of their life have been happy, other parts unhappy, and most people that some parts have been more happy or less unhappy than others. The objections which I make below to regarding even a sublimated happiness as *the* end may be urged also to the attempt to make the end consist in satisfaction of any kind. It is true no doubt that any experience which we pronounce valuable must give satisfaction, but to make satisfaction the end almost inevitably suggests that things are valuable in proportion as they satisfy this or that individual's actual desires, irrespective of their nature, whereas in fact we feel that it is better to be 'a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied, than a fool satisfied' (Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 14).

contend, 'except when defending a thesis,' that those complaints which bring extreme depression with them as a mere physiological consequence are compatible with any high degree of happiness. And there are 'blows'—public or private calamities, failures, bereavements—which make the recovery of happiness impossible to most men; nor can it be laid down as a general proposition that all good men are happy. To say how far a bad man can be happy would involve pushing the definition of an essentially vague conception further than it is commonly pushed. We should have to talk of different kinds or different senses of happiness. The bad man is no doubt generally unhappy because any better desires that he has are unsatisfied, and because very often his desires and inclinations are of a kind that are incompatible with one another, so that one part or aspect of his nature is always unsatisfied: his life has no wholeness or unity. But this is not perhaps always the case: the bad man no doubt cannot get the same happiness as the good man, but he may get what he wants, and so may attain a kind of happiness. At all events we may say that, though, on the whole, goodness tends to make people happy (far more generally than it tends to increase the sum of their pleasures), men are not happy in proportion to their goodness. We cannot, therefore, without using words in unusual and unnatural senses, so far sublimate the idea of happiness as to identify it with the end of life in general, with consciousness that has value, with Well-being. It is a most important element no doubt in true Well-being—a far more important one than pleasure; or (if we say that happiness is a particular kind of pleasure) it is a far more valuable kind of pleasure than any other, and far more inseparable than most other pleasures from the goods to which we ascribe the very highest value. And yet it is not by itself *the* good. We cannot say that it actually includes all forms of pleasure that are valuable, high intellectual or aesthetic development or even goodness, though the most complete kind of happiness may presuppose the last. Still less, when the good is unattainable, can we say that, among goods or elements of the good, happiness is always the one that possesses the most value, or is the one to which all others should be sacrificed. The

noblest kinds of self-devotion do involve a real sacrifice not merely of pleasure but of happiness.

Happiness has this much in common with the good—that for most of us it represents an ideal which we can hardly say that we have ever enjoyed in the undiluted and unruffled fullness which we picture to ourselves as possible and desirable; that we can only form an ideal conception of it by putting together, amplifying, idealizing moments or periods or elements of our actual experience, supposing them continuously prolonged, and leaving out all that disturbed or qualified the joyous moments while they were actually there. Perfect happiness is no doubt an ideal, but it is a different ideal from that of perfect Well-being. It is an ideal which, at least for people who have in their way higher desires and aspirations, is closely connected with the highest elements in life, but still it cannot safely be made the sole and direct object of pursuit by each individual for himself. Perfect Well-being would doubtless include perfect happiness, but it would include much more than we ordinarily mean by happiness. The idea of happiness can no more be dispensed with in any concrete account of the ideal life than the idea of pleasure, and can equally little be identified with that of value. It is not the whole of the ideal life, but an element or an aspect of it. The ideal life or the good is an ultimate conception which does not admit of further definition, and the content of which we can only express by enumerating the various elements or aspects of it, and then explaining in what way they are to be combined. Among these elements happiness and pleasure are both included, but they are not the whole; though no doubt the kind of happiness and the kind of pleasure which do enter into the ideal life are inseparable from those other elements of it which we call goodness or the good will, knowledge, thought, the contemplation of beauty, love of other persons and of what is best in them.

CHAPTER III

SELF-REALIZATION AND SELF-SACRIFICE

I

At this point it seems desirable to define further the attitude towards two opposite views with regard to the end of human life which is implied in the preceding chapters, although the question has not yet been raised in its conventional form. On the one hand we are met by a doctrine very fashionable in philosophical circles which finds the key to all ethical problems in that comfortable word 'self-realization'; on the other hand we have a doctrine, hardly ever expressly adopted in modern Europe as the basis of a Moral Philosophy, but prominent in much of the popular religious teaching, and some of the highest religious teaching, of our age—the doctrine which resolves all Morality into self-sacrifice.

With the psychological doctrine that some form of personal good is the object of every desire (though that good need not be pleasure) I have already dealt. It seems to be open to exactly the same objections as those urged by its supporters against psychological Hedonism, into a refined form of which the doctrine of self-realization shows a strong tendency to degenerate. I shall here therefore confine myself to the purely ethical aspect of this fascinating formula—'Self-realization is the end of life.'

In order to subject the doctrine to any profitable criticism, it seems necessary to attempt the by no means easy task of distinguishing the various possible senses in which this watchword seems to be used by its devotees. The formula would probably have proved less attractive, had these various senses been distinguished by those to whom it presents itself as a 'short and easy way' out of all ethical perplexities.

(1) Firstly, then, we may suppose that the upholder of self-realization means exactly what he says. If he does, it seems easy to show that what he is committing himself to is mere self-contradictory nonsense. To realize means to make real. You cannot make real what is real already, and the self must certainly be regarded as real before we are invited to set about realizing it [1]. Nor is the task to which we are invited rendered easier when we are assured that the self, which is to become something that it was not, is out of time, and consequently (one might have supposed) insusceptible of change.

(2) But of course it will be said that what is actually meant by self-realization is the realization of some potentiality or capacity of the self which is at present unrealized. In this sense no doubt it is true enough that Morality must consist in some kind of self-realization. But to say so is to say something 'generally admitted indeed but obscure' (*ὁμολογούμενόν τι ἀλλ' ἀσαφές*), as Aristotle would have put it. In this sense the formula gives us just no information at all. For whatever you do or abstain from doing, if you only sit still or go to sleep, you must still be realizing some one of your capacities: since nobody can by any possibility do anything which he was not first capable of doing. Morality is self-realization beyond a doubt, but then so is immorality. The precious formula leaves out the whole differentia of Morality; and it is a differentia presumably which we are in search of when we ask, 'What is Morality?' and are solemnly told, 'It is doing or being something which you are capable of doing or being [2].'

(3) It may be maintained that Morality is the realization of *all* the capacities of human nature. But this is impossible, since one capacity can only be realized by the non-realization or sacrifice of some other capacity. There can be no self-realization

[1] It is of course possible to hold that the self is not real in an ultimate metaphysical sense, but in that sense it is hard to see how it can be made more real than it is, unless 'real' is used as a mere synonym of 'good.'

[2] '"Self-realisation" has always impressed me as a conundrum rather than as its solution' (Adamson, *Development of Modern Philosophy*, II, p. 109).

without self-sacrifice. The good man and the bad alike realize one element or capacity of their nature, and sacrifice another. The whole question is which capacity is to be realized and which is to be sacrificed. And as to this our formula gives us just no information.

(4) Or more vaguely self-realization may be interpreted to mean an equal, all-round development of one's whole nature—physical, intellectual, emotional. To such a view I should object that, interpreted strictly and literally, it is just as impracticable as the last. It is impossible for the most gifted person to become a first-rate Musician without much less completely realizing any capacity he has of becoming a first-rate Painter. It is impossible to become really learned in one subject without remaining ignorant of many others: impossible to develope one's athletic capacities to the full without starving and stunting the intellect, impossible (as a simple matter of Physiology) to carry to its highest point the cultivation of one's intellectual faculties without some sacrifice of physical efficiency. There is a similar collision between the demands of intellectual cultivation and those of practical work. Up to a certain point it is extremely desirable no doubt that every man should seek to improve his mind, and also to engage in some sort of practical, social activity. There is no practical work, except that which is purely mechanical, which will not be the better done for a little study of some kind or other: and, even where a man's ordinary work in life is most purely practical, he has, or ought to have, a life of practical citizenship outside his daily task which will be enriched and enlarged by some kind of intellectual cultivation. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the extent for instance to which the efficiency of the clerical or of the scholastic profession would be increased if every clergyman and every schoolmaster, however much absorbed in the work of his profession, were to devote a few hours a week to serious study. And equally valuable to the intellectual man is a certain measure of practical experience—equally valuable, at least in many cases, even in the interests of his purely intellectual work. Familiar illustrations are to be found in the value to Hume of his diplomatic appointment, the value to Macaulay and Grote (as is acknowledged by

the critics of a nation which has little experience in free political life) of their parliamentary careers, the value to Gibbon even of a few months' home service in the Hampshire militia. And, even in spheres of intellectual labour less connected with practice than the writing of History, a literary life may gain something from more active occupations. Up to a certain point it is no doubt desirable that a man should endeavour to develope different sides of his nature: but that point is soon reached. Beyond that point there must come the inevitable sacrifice—of body to mind or of mind to body, of learning or speculative insight to practical efficiency or of practical efficiency to learning or insight.

It is the same within the intellectual sphere itself. There too the law of sacrifice prevails. Up to a certain point no doubt the man who is a mere specialist will be a bad specialist, but that point is soon reached. Charles Darwin found that the cultivation of reasoning power and observation had extinguished his once keen imagination and aesthetic sensibility. And yet who would wish—whether in the interests of the world or in the interests of what was best worthy of development in Charles Darwin's own nature—that his work should have been spoiled in order that one of the three hours which was the maximum working day his health allowed should have been absorbed by politics or philanthropy? Who would decide that the origin of species should have been undiscovered, in order that the man who might have discovered it should retain the power of enjoying Wordsworth? This notion of an equal, all-round, 'harmonious' development is thus a sheer impossibility, excluded by the very constitution of human nature, and incompatible with the welfare of human society. And, in so far as some approximation to such an ideal of life is possible, it involves a very apotheosis of mediocrity, ineffectiveness, dilettantism.

And there is a more formidable objection to come. If the ideal of self-realization is to be logically carried out, it must involve the cultivation of a man's capacity for what vulgar prejudice calls Immorality as well as of his capacity for Morality. It is quite arbitrary to exclude certain kinds of activity as 'bad,' because what we are in search of was some definition of the good

in conduct, and we were told that it was the development of all his capacities. Mr. Bradley would really appear not to shrink from the full acceptance of this corollary:

'This double effort of the mind to enlarge by all means its domain, to widen in every way both the world of knowledge and the realm of practice, shows us merely two sides of that single impulse to self-realization, which most of us are agreed to find so mystical. But, mystical or intelligible, we must bow to its sway, for escape is impossible[1].'

'To widen in every direction the sphere of knowledge.' That may, in the abstract, be accepted. It would perhaps be hypercritical to suggest that there are some things not worth knowing, that it would be an unprofitable employment to count the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, and that even the pursuit of knowledge must be governed and controlled by a certain selection based upon an ideal comparison of values, which is the work of the practical Reason. And again it might be well to remember that there are things of which (with Mill) we may say that 'it is necessary to be aware of them; but to live in their contemplation makes it scarcely possible to keep up in oneself a high tone of mind. The imagination and feelings become tuned to a lower pitch; degrading instead of elevating associations become connected with the daily objects and incidents of life, and give their colour to the thoughts, just as associations of sensuality do in those who indulge freely in that sort of contemplations[2]'—a reminder which, in view of Mr. Bradley's plea for the apparently unlimited 'freedom of Art,' might seem to be not wholly irrelevant. But to 'widen in every direction the sphere of practice'! In the name of common sense, would not an occasional incursion into the higher branches of crime vary the sameness of Virtue and the dull monotony of Goodness? Is not a life compounded of good and evil 'wider' than an experience which includes only good? Could the attempt to widen 'in every direction' the sphere of practice end otherwise than in a prison or a lunatic asylum—if not in both? A German thinker has urged that the failure of most Moral

[1] *The Principles of Logic*, p. 452.
[2] *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 248.

Philosophers may be set down to the fact that as a class, they have been rather exceptionally respectable men: the Moral Philosopher should have experience both of Virtue and of vice[1]. If 'wideness' is to be sole criterion of practice, one does not see why this catholicity of experience should be confined to professional Moral Philosophers[2].

(5) One possible interpretation of our formula remains. Self-realization may mean the realization of a man's highest capacities by the sacrifice of the lower. No doubt, in a sense every school of Moral Philosophy which allows of the distinction between a 'higher' and a 'lower' at all would admit that Morality does mean the sacrifice of the lower to the higher—though it might be objected that this ideal, taken literally, is too ascetic: the lower capacities of human nature have a certain value: they ought to be realized to a certain extent—to be subordinated, not 'sacrificed,' except in so far as their realization is inconsistent with that of the higher. But then there is nothing of all this in the word 'self-realization.' And even with the gloss that 'self-realization' means realization of the 'true' or 'higher' self, it tells us just nothing at all about the question what this true

[1] See Simmel's article on 'Moral Deficiencies as determining Intellectual Functions' in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III, July, 1893, p. 490. Of course I do not profess here to do full justice to the distinguished writer's argument.

[2] 'The sinner realises capabilities—in this broad sense—as much as the saint. I lay stress on this, because it is important to recognise that one of the subtlest and deepest of the impulses that prompt intellectual natures to vice is the desire for full and varied realisation of capabilities, for richness of experience, for fulness of life' (Sidgwick, *Ethics of Green, Spencer and Martineau*, p. 64).

In a recent article on 'Truth and Practice' (*Mind*, N. S. no. 51, 1904, p 322) Mr. Bradley writes, 'I have of course not forgotten that there are "developments" of human nature which are undesirable and vicious. Why these are undesirable is a question which I cannot discuss here. The answer in general is that such things not only are contrary to the interest of our whole nature, but also are hostile to the realisation of that very side of it to which they belong.' If Mr. Bradley had always remembered this and some other things which he says in this article, the above criticism would have been unnecessary. A thinker who is so ready to find contradictions or absurdities in other people should surely be a little more precise in his own use of language.

self-realization is. In fact the formula which is presented to us as the key to the ethical problem of the end of life, turns out on examination to mean merely 'The end of life is the end of life.' No doubt it has been said that every attempt to define Morality must have the appearance of moving in a circle. In a sense that may be the case. The moral cannot be defined in terms of the non-moral. But then that is just what our formula attempts to do, and that is just the source of its futility. Moreover, when the word 'self-realization' is presented to us, not merely as an account of the end, but also as the immediate criterion for the individual's conduct, it is open to the objection that it says exactly nothing about the fundamental question of Ethics—the question of the relation of my end to that of others.

(6) This last difficulty would be removed if, with Mr. Bradley in one of his phases (a phase difficult to reconcile with the definition given above), we contend that the self which is realized in Morality, actually includes in itself all the selves in whom I feel an interest:

'If my self which I aim at is the realization in me of a moral world which is a system of selves, an organism in which I am a member, and in whose life I live—then I cannot aim at my own well-being without aiming at that of others. The others are not mere means to me, but are involved in my essence[1].'

Now to the adoption of self-realization in this sense as an answer to the ethical problem I should object (*a*) that the interpretation is not the one which is naturally suggested by that term. If the end of life is (in part or in whole) to attain the ends of others besides myself, that is a most important truth which should surely be emphasized in any answer, however summary, to the question, 'What is the end of life?'; and not left to be understood in a formula which takes no explicit account of it. (*b*) We are as far off as ever from knowing what the 'realization' of the other selves, which is included in the realization of mine, really is. (*c*) The proposition that I cannot attain my end without promoting the end of others is at all events

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 105.

an intelligible proposition. Not so, I respectfully submit, the proposition that 'others are involved in my essence[1].' Such an assertion seems to me to ignore the very essence of self-hood, which excludes an absorption or inclusion in other selves, however closely related to us. Of course, Mr. Bradley will reply that we cannot distinguish a thing from its relations. And yet Mr. Bradley has himself taught us—no one more effectively—that there cannot be relations without something to relate. No doubt a *thing*, which does not exist for itself, but only in and for a mind, cannot even in thought be abstracted from its relations: the thing is made what it is by its intelligible relations, if we include in its relations the content which it has for a mind other than itself. But this is not so with a self. Unquestionably there can be no subject without an object: the very nature of a subject is constituted by its knowledge of such and such objects. The objects that it knows are part of the self; in the view of a thorough-going Idealism, indeed, the subject and its experiences make up one spiritual being. But, all the same, of such a spiritual being it is not true that it is made what it is by its relation to other spiritual beings in the same way as a mere thing, which exists for others and not for itself, is made what it is by its relations. The *thing* has no *esse* except to be felt, thought, experienced; the way it enters into the experience of minds is the only sort of being it possesses. On the other hand, the 'esse' of the soul is to think, to feel to experience. This thinking, feeling, experiencing does undoubtedly include relations to other selves; but such relations are not the whole of its being. The experiences of a soul may be *like* those of another soul: they may be caused by and dependent upon the experiences of another soul. But the experiences of one soul cannot be or become identical with the experience of another soul: the content of two consciousnesses may be the same—the universal abstracted from the particular, but not the reality[2]: neither, therefore, can the good of one soul or self be the good of another, or be included in or be part of the good of another. Hence, if we are to avoid

[1] A position further developed in the Chapter on 'Good' in *Appearance and Reality*.

[2] I have further discussed this matter below in Bk. III, chap. i.

a mysticism which frankly takes leave of intelligibility, we cannot include any realization of the capacities of others in our conception of self-realization, however essential to such realization the good of others may be. If all that is meant is that other selves may be ends to me, not mere means, that is precisely the point which is usually disguised, if it is not denied, by those who employ the formula 'self-realization.' The tendency of the phrase is to represent all moral conduct as motived by a desire for my own good, into which consideration of others can only enter as means to the realization of my end. Even if there be a more ultimate metaphysical sense in which my self and others are really the same self, that is not in the sense with which we have to do with selves in Ethics: in Ethics at least we are concerned with the relations between a plurality of selves[1].

Further defence of this last objection would carry us more deeply into the metaphysical region than it would be in place to go at present. But I trust that what has been said will be enough to suggest that there is nothing to be gained by the use of this ambiguous, mysterious term. It tells us nothing important, nothing that could not be better expressed in some other way. It is an attempt to evade the real problems of Morality instead of answering them. That is sufficiently indicated by the fact that it is equally popular with writers whose real ethical ideals are as wide apart as the poles—with the school of the late Professor Green and with the school of Mr. Bradley, with those whose ideal is austere to the point of Asceticism and with those by whom a large part of what the plain man calls Morality is regarded as an exploded superstition. For some people it has the attraction of a vague, imposing technicality, acting like 'that comfortable word Mesopotamia' upon the mind of the pious old woman. With others it is a mere cover for a more or less refined Hedonism[2]. What they really mean is 'the end of life

[1] 'From "self-seeking" to disinterested benevolence there is no road, and the apparent subsumption of both under a common name by the theory of self-realisation, turns out at closer inspection to be little more than a piece of verbal legerdemain' (Taylor, *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 193).

[2] I do not say that this is so with any English Philosopher of repute, but the possibility of thus understanding the phrase accounts for the enthusiasm of some of its younger votaries.

is to have a good time,' but they do not quite like to say so because there is a vulgar prejudice against that view; and besides, in academic circles there is a general consensus that Hedonism is unphilosophical. To minds of a higher order no doubt the term appeals simply because it is a protest against the practical exaggerations and the logical difficulties of the attempt to exalt 'self-sacrifice' into an all-sufficing expression of the moral ideal. The best way, therefore, of bringing out the truth expressed—as it seems to me, badly and cumbrously expressed—by the use of the term 'self-realization' will be to examine the claims of the counter-ideal of self-sacrifice to sum up in itself the essence of all Morality.

II

Why cannot the ideal of self-sacrifice be accepted as the last word in Ethics?

(1) For the same reason that we saw to be fatal to the antagonistic formula of 'self-realization.' Just as there can be no self-realization or (to use a term less open to objection) 'self-development' without self-sacrifice, so there can be no self-sacrifice without self-realization. In denying or sacrificing one part or element or capacity of the self, a man is necessarily asserting or developing another. Complete or absolute self-sacrifice is possible only in the form of suicide, if even so; for after all suicide is always a kind of self-assertion, and often a kind of selfishness. What of course is meant by those who use the term is that the highest self is to be asserted or developed, and that the individual attains his true end by the sacrifice of his lower inclinations or desires for the sake of other people. To gain the lower life is to lose the higher: to lose the lower is to gain the true life. That is the very essence of the highest moral teaching that the world has known. But then the formula 'self-sacrifice' only expresses one half of that doctrine; and the one-sided formula often leads to much one-sidedness and exaggeration in ethical thought and even in practical Morality.

(2) It needs little reflection to show that self-sacrifice for its own sake is always irrational and immoral. It is the object for which the sacrifice is made that gives it its moral value. It is

always some good of another or some higher good of the individual that is the object of legitimate self-sacrifice. On reflection this would probably be admitted by the austerest of ascetics. The flesh is to be subdued to the spirit—that is the theory of Asceticism. And to a large extent the fallacy of Asceticism in its ordinary sense consists in a sheer psychological mistake about the tendency of bodily austerities or privations to promote a higher and more spiritual life. That long-continued hunger will eventually lead men to see visions and dream dreams which, in minds educated in a certain way, will assume a religious form, is no doubt a psychological fact, which is of great importance historically as supplying at least a partial explanation of the practice of fasting as a religious rite. But (waiving the question of the religious value of such psychical states or of the less vivid ecstasies which may sometimes be produced by fasting of a less extreme character) it is the testimony of countless ascetics in all ages[1] that the more they scourged and tormented themselves, stood up to their chins in swamps or rolled themselves among thorns, the more gross became their sensual imaginings, the more clamorous and insistent their passions. In less extreme cases it is probable that there has been an enormous exaggeration of the spiritual value, for the great majority at least, of solitude, hardship, and privation. The tendency of such self-conscious effort to crush the appetites is simply to concentrate attention upon them. In general, a man's mind is not raised above the level of the lower desires and animal inclinations by austerity, but by healthy preoccupation with social or intellectual activity. Of course there may be room for Asceticism by way of discipline. We may deny ourselves in things that do not matter in order to strengthen the will in resistance to inclination where it does matter. But it may be doubted whether the self-consciousness attendant upon such self-inflicted disciplinary privations—at least in communities where they are not recognized by social custom—is not a grave objection to them. The real needs of our fellow men afford the completest scope

[1] Even to the attenuated fasts of modern times these remarks are not wholly inapplicable. There is a sermon of Cardinal Newman on 'Fasting a Source of Trial.' Ought temptations to be artificially multiplied?

for rational curtailment of the lower kinds of self-indulgence, whether this takes the form of periodical abstinence, of habitual moderation, or of self-denial in other things besides eating and drinking.

But, whatever may be thought about the kind and degree of self-denial which really promote the higher life, there will be little quarrel with the general principle—that self-sacrifice is not the end, but a means to the good of others or to the higher good of the man himself: and perhaps it will even be admitted that self-denial for our own spiritual good is more likely to attain its end, the more directly the indulgence which is surrendered stands in the way of something higher—for instance, by wasting time or money which might be employed upon self-improvement or social service. This will generally be conceded: and yet there can be no doubt that in practice the preaching of Asceticism has a tendency to degenerate into the idea that self-inflicted pain has in it something intrinsically virtuous or meritorious and is therefore well-pleasing to God, even when God is conceived of as a righteous and loving Father. And at one point such a notion may find formal defenders among Christian Theologians. There has been in various ages, if there does not now survive, a widespread belief in the expiatory value of suffering. Such a notion seems to be implied in the retributive theory of punishment which has already been examined and rejected. If punishment really does wipe out guilt or assert the Moral Law or what not, there seems no reason why it should be confined to the case of legal offences or why it should not be self-inflicted: and it might even be contended plausibly enough that its expiatory value need not be diminished when the penalty is paid by some one other than the sinner[1]. As I have already discussed

[1] It is a deeply significant fact that, according to some authorities, the original idea of ritual sacrifice was not expiation, but communion with the Deity through participation in the common meal—originally the blood of the Totem-animal. The idea of expiation only came in because the natural way of renewing the tie between the tribe and the god when it had been weakened through an offence seemed to be a special repetition of the act by which the blood-bond had been created and kept alive. Thus the idea of expiation as the dominant idea in sacrifice represents a degradation of the original conception. (See Robertson Smith's Chapter on 'Sacrifice' in his

what is virtually the same question in connexion with the theory of punishment, I need only add that I can see no meaning in expiation except the tendency of suffering (under certain conditions) to make the sufferer morally better. Even within the limits of severely orthodox Theology much support might be found for the proposition that the remission of sins necessarily follows upon repentance, and that repentance ultimately means change of will or character.

(3) Not only does a one-sided doctrine of self-sacrifice exaggerate the value of thwarting lower desires as a means to the gratification of the higher, but it errs by denying all value to those lower goods the surrender of which it advocates. In the first place it fails to appreciate the fact that desires other than the pure impulse to do one's duty for its own sake have a value of their own, and may become, when duly regulated, the basis of the highest virtues: and that is the case not merely with such purely intellectual impulses as the love of knowledge, but with many which, in themselves and apart from their subordination to a higher purpose, are purely animal, and may degenerate into the inspiring motives of crime and vice. The raw material, so to speak, of Virtue and Vice is the same —i. e. desires which in themselves, abstracted from their relation to the higher self, are not either moral or immoral but simply non-moral [1]. Anger in some forms is the most anti-social of all passions: while indignation against vice is an essential element in the ideal character. To hate the right things, to hate that in persons which is worthy of hatred, is as essential an object of all moral education as to love the right things, and to love those possibilities of higher things which exist in the vilest. An animal impulse is to many men the basis of the most powerful temptation and of the highest affection that they ever know.

Religion of the Semites, p. 213 *sq.*, and Jevons, *History of Religion*, p. 144 *sq.*) Whatever may be thought of the chronological order of the ideas, the corruption and degradation of Religion at every stage of its development is closely connected with the prominence of the idea of expiation as compared with that of communion or fellowship between the Deity and his worshippers.

[1] Ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ γίνεται πᾶσι ἀρετὴ καὶ φθείρεται. Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* II. i. (p. 1103*b*).

The gregarious instinct that prompts us to seek the society and approval of our fellow-men is the most fruitful source of moral failure when it attaches itself to narrow social circles and low social ideals: duly developed in a certain direction and cultivated in a certain way it blossoms into the 'enthusiasm of humanity.' The denial of this truth forms the great fallacy into which the ascetics of all ages have fallen. The principle was inadequately grasped by Plato, who, while recognizing the moral usefulness of the combative instinct (τὸ θυμοειδές) as the ally of Reason against the lower passions, did not see that these too were capable of being, and ought to be in various degrees, educated and guided by Reason, instead of being merely crushed and suppressed. It was ignored by Kant when he thought that every wise man would fain be wholly free from desire. It was ignored by the Stoics when they recommended the suppression of emotion. It is the great glory of Aristotle, and of his disciples the mediaeval Schoolmen, to have grasped firmly the idea that Reason should control, discipline, regulate the desires instead of extinguishing them, and that rightly regulated desire is as essential an element of the ideal character as the paramount supremacy of Reason or Conscience[1].

(4) In certain directions and to a certain extent, then, all natural impulses are susceptible of being taken up into, and actually transformed into, those more social tendencies of the self the predominance of which is ordinarily spoken of as self-sacrifice. But, even where this is not the case, moral Reason does not seem to sanction the idea that these lower desires, or the goods which are the objects of them, possess no intrinsic value at all. The ideal human life does demand a certain amount of these

[1] This constitutes the real meaning and importance of the doctrine that Virtue is a mean περὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις, a mean between the excess and defect of each kind of feeling or acting, however inadequate such a doctrine may be as a moral criterion. Aristotle's mistake was to give an exaggerated prominence to one of the most important ways in which Reason regulates the πάθη and πράξεις, that of quantity; this made it necessary to find two vices between which to place each virtue. This can generally be done, but not always. The inadequacy and unsatisfactoriness of Aristotle's list of virtues arises largely from the necessity of excluding all virtues which cannot conveniently be squeezed into the form of a mean between two vices.

lower goods. The ideal human life is not a life of pain and want and discomfort. The ascetic seldom suggests that we should promote such a life for others. To be virtuous on the rack is better than to be vicious off it; but there is one thing that is better than being virtuous on the rack, and that is to be virtuous off it. 'It is better' (according to the admission of J. S. Mill) 'to be Socrates dissatisfied than to be a fool satisfied:' but there is one thing that is better than either—to be Socrates satisfied. What is the relation of the higher and the lower goods, what amount or degree of the lower is consistent with or most conducive to the due predominance of the higher in human lives, is a question about which men may reasonably differ, but it must not be assumed that it is always the irreducible *minimum*. And the true answer will of course be different for different men. The great practical mistake of the more moderate ascetic teaching has been to lay upon average men burdens too great *for them*, to require a repression of natural instincts and desires which *in them* (whatever be the case with exceptional natures) does not promote the healthy development of character and the efficient conduct of life. The necessity of exercise, amusement, society, even in the interests of moral Well-being, is recognized by the best religious Ethics of the present day as it has hardly been recognized by the religious teaching of the past. This of course, it may be said, implies merely the treatment of those lower goods as means to a higher end: but it would be perhaps hard to defend the place which the best men of our day would assign to them in the life which they want to promote for the mass of men without admitting that there are elements in the ideal life —elements possessing an independent, though subordinate, worth of their own—other than the cultivation of the good will, other than socially useful activity or high intellectual cultivation. And even for the best men it is hardly felt that it is wrong to eat or drink more than is absolutely essential to health, to spend time in conversation or light reading that might without mental breakdown be devoted to work. Or, if for exceptional persons it is felt that this indulgence of lower goods ought to be cut down to the minimum point that is compatible with the maximum of social efficiency, we should probably on reflection justify this

course, partly on the ground that such men will attain the greatest good for them in exertions which go beyond the powers of most; and partly on the principle that, if for some persons it is a duty to sacrifice much that is not normally inconsistent with the predominance of the highest interests, the sacrifice is demanded by the value of the other lives which are helped by their exertions, without any disparagement or contempt for the ordinary sources of healthy human enjoyment. The ascetic life which is devoted to the procuring of an enjoyable life for others, for the sake of that life, is no longer ascetic in principle.

(5) And that brings us to a last necessary qualification of the one-sided ideal of self-sacrifice. Normally and in the abstract, Reason does not demand that a man should give up any good of his own except for the greater good of some one else. And, in estimating the greatness of the good, we must of course not include the good implied by the sacrifice itself. The test would become nugatory if we held that the man who sacrifices himself always gets the greater good, just because his act is one of self-sacrifice. Speaking broadly and generally, Reason does not (as it appears to me) hold that it is good to promote (say) the comfort and convenience of another person by the sacrifice of a much greater comfort and convenience of one's own. Of course the stronger altruistic impulses will tend to overleap this restriction, to

> reject the lore
> Of nicely calculated less or more.

And there may be times and circumstances in which the calmest reflection may discern such a beauty and propriety in the sacrifice that it will pronounce 'good on the whole' to result from it, as when a mother, not grudgingly or of necessity but willingly and spontaneously, gives up much more for her child than he will gain by the sacrifice: but normally and apart from any special circumstances or relations of the persons, I do not think it can be said that we do on calm reflection approve the sacrifice of more for less. If Sir Walter Raleigh's act in spreading his cloak in the mud to make a dry place for Queen Elizabeth to walk on be approved in spite of the fact that the gain to the Queen was probably smaller than the damage to Sir Walter's

cloak, it must be on account of the special relation in which a Queen stands to her subject.

(6) The requirement of unlimited Altruism would involve self-contradiction. If I judge that another's pleasure is a good thing for me to promote I cannot logically deny that my own pleasure is a good too—a good intrinsically worthy of being promoted. It cannot be right for me to spend my labour in producing that which it is wrong for another to receive—in growing fruit, for instance, which it would be wicked for another to eat. At some point or other enjoyment must begin: the end of life cannot be a continual passing on of something to another. It may be urged that the ideal is that I should be producing something for another, and find my good in doing so: while he is working in turn for my good, and finds his good in doing so. That is no doubt the true ideal—a life in which work for lower needs is elevated by becoming social or reciprocal, enjoyment of lower goods consecrated by being shared. But common sense will clearly set some limit to this exchange of services: some things each of us does better for himself than another can do them for him. The greater part of most ordinarily good men's lives resists this sharp distinction into an egoistic and an altruistic part: it is egoistic and altruistic at the same time. But this very interchange of services, which is at the basis of all social life, would be impossible if men would not consent to be served as well as to serve. We may share enjoyment with another, but not the enjoyment of the very same thing: two people cannot possibly eat the same apple. If the apple is ever to be eaten instead of being passed on, that implies a limit to Altruism[1]. If it were never right for me to eat it, it would not be right for me to encourage the egoism of my neighbour by inviting him to do so.

So long as we confine ourselves to the higher goods, the limitation of altruistic self-sacrifice in the interests of personal

[1] I am here thinking of the normal or average man. What is said about limitations to self-sacrifice (and to Asceticism in so far as self-sacrifice involves Asceticism) must be qualified by what is said below in the chapter on 'Vocation.' In particular cases much sacrifice may be right which would become irrational if imposed upon all.

culture will readily be admitted. It will be conceded that the whole energy of a community ought not to be absorbed in the production of material goods; nor can it well be conceived of as being entirely absorbed in the work of mutual edification, in the direct improvement of each other's characters. What is to be done then with the rest of it? Various forms of intellectual or aesthetic self-development and enjoyment seem to remain as the only possible objects of rational pursuit. No doubt most intellectual activities are capable of assuming a social direction. I can write books or compose poetry or research or play the piano for the benefit of others, and not merely for my own enjoyment. But then it cannot be right for me to play or compose music which it would be sinful waste of time for another to listen to. It is clear, therefore, that some portion of an individual's time and energy may rightly be given to the enjoyment of higher goods for their own sake without any further social object.

With regard to lower goods, more scruple may be felt at the employment of this argument. It may be said that there is really no inconsistency in holding that it is always better to surrender to another any lower object of enjoyment which is not positively demanded by my own efficiency, and therefore, ultimately, the good of others: for it is not because it is good for another to enjoy himself that I think it right to make the sacrifice, but because it is a charitable act and beneficial to my character to give him that pleasure. But, once again, if pleasure is not to be thought of as a good, how can it be morally good to spend time and labour in producing it? And, if it is good for another, it must be good—up to whatever point, within whatever limits—for me also. The ideal of unlimited self-sacrifice involves obvious and inevitable self-contradiction.

III

Considerations like these may easily be pushed to the point of representing that the idea of self-sacrifice forms no essential part of the true moral ideal. That ideal, it may be urged, is always the subordination of the lower to the higher — the development of the different parts of the man's nature—not,

indeed, in all directions equally, but in the true order of their relative worth or importance. And in this subordination there need be nothing which can be properly called sacrifice at all —no sense of pain or contraction, no struggle or resistance to inclination. For the good man will recognize in social service the opportunity of developing his truest self. It will cost him no pain to be temperate, to control his appetites, to be (within reasonable limits) unselfish and hard-working: for he sees that these things are for his own good. All his desires are so completely dominated and directed by Reason that he has no desire for indulgences which would interfere with perfect intellectual clearness and perfect control of appetite: he loves work, occupation in the service of the community, or some intellectual pursuit for its own sake. This perfect 'harmony' between the various elements of a man's nature, it may be urged, is the true ideal. Self-sacrifice must be at most an incident of imperfect 'adjustment' between the individual and his environment. The requirement of it must belong to the imperfect Morality of youth; to the youth of the race, or at most to the defective organization of human society. This line of thought is in various forms so prevalent that, at the risk of some repetition, it may be worth while to consider what amount of truth we can recognize in it. Briefly I should reply that the kind of harmony which such speculations bid us seek is rendered for ever impossible (1) by the nature of man, (2) by the nature of things, (3) by the nature of human society.

(1) The extinction of self-sacrifice, felt as such, is inconsistent with the attainment of the highest character owing to the constitution of human nature.

That Virtue cannot be attained without a struggle was admitted even by Aristotle. But then to Aristotle the man was not good until the virtuous 'habit' was fully formed. He assumed that the imperfectly virtuous acts by which the habit of virtuous action was formed would be done from some non-moral motive. How the repetition of a series of acts influenced by *wholly* non-moral motives would result in a habit of acting from moral motives, of doing the virtuous act for its own sake, is never satisfactorily explained; that is the great hiatus of

Aristotle's ethical system. So far is it from being true that there is no moral value in the struggle against temptation so long as the pleasantness of the pleasure renounced is felt, that moral value seems to the modern mind to be at its maximum in such struggles[1]. The amount of struggle which goes to the formation of a virtuous character is no doubt very various. To some men goodness seems more or less to come naturally; to others only after long and strenuous conflict. That natural tendency to evil which Theologians have called 'original sin' seems to be very unequally distributed; and very unequal in different men is the strength of those purely animal impulses which, though in themselves not evil, do not at once submit to rational control. The needful struggle is doubtless proportionately unequal. But it is difficult to see how without some struggle a virtuous character can be formed at all. Certainly, in the absence of temptation the character cannot be tested; and until the character has been tested, there would seem to be rather the potentiality of Virtue or character than the actuality of it. The struggle need not be always kept up, but it must have been gone through. Perhaps we may have in this consideration some glimpse of a clue to the real meaning of evil in a rationally governed Universe. But at all events, confining ourselves to human life as we know it, we may say that it is in and through the struggle that the good will most emphatically asserts itself. In this sense at all events Morality can never lose the aspect of self-sacrifice.

But is this all? When is this education of the character to stop? Even Aristotle admitted that for the mass of men the necessity of moral discipline, in the shape of Law, was not confined to youth; and that implies that for them at least the desirable harmony could not be practically attained in absolute perfection. It was probably the extreme moderation of the demands which, under ordinary circumstances, Aristotle's

[1] It is curious to find a writer so little prone to any form of Rigorism as Simmel exaggerating this aspect of Morality so far as to maintain that there is no merit except where the virtuous impulse has had to struggle against another, and that the merit is proportionate to the effort (*Einleitung*, I, p. 264 *sq.*).

ethical code imposed upon the inclinations of a cultivated Greek gentleman that prevented his recognizing that that desirable condition in which nothing that was wrong would ever present itself as pleasant was practically not attainable in this life even by the best of men. This consideration will at least suggest the practical danger of making 'harmony' the primary aim of moral effort: the feeling of 'harmony' in the self-satisfied man of culture, like the 'peace' of conventional religionism, is quite as likely in practice to be the outcome of a low ideal as of a perfected 'habit' of Virtue. Still, it may be urged, however far off and difficult of attainment it may be, 'harmony' is the ideal: the feeling of struggle is always a note of imperfection. But is this always and necessarily so?

Aristotle's account of the formation of the virtuous 'habit' with the consequent disappearance of struggle is no doubt a fairly accurate description of the inner life of the good man *under favourable circumstances*, so long as we confine ourselves to the very limited range of moral experience which was probably present to Aristotle's mind. We should not think highly of a man who continued to feel very painfully throughout life the struggle to prevent the more violent explosions of temper or to avoid grossly over-eating and over-drinking himself. No doubt the effort to overcome the more vulgar or animal temptations does normally become indefinitely easier after a certain period of resistance. But does it always do so? And is not the extent to which it does so quite as much dependent upon physiological constitution as upon character? Can we say that a man's character is defective because a healthy appetite would always prompt him to eat somewhat more than a sedentary life or a weak digestion or a slender purse or the claims of others may make it his duty to take? Is a man intemperate because he could always enjoy one more glass of wine or a better wine than it is right habitually to indulge in? No doubt in normal cases, where the mind is duly occupied with higher interests, and where outward circumstances are favourable, the struggle does become something which it sounds a little ridiculous to call pain or sacrifice. But, however small, the struggle is sufficient to prevent our talking of perfect

harmony. It must be remembered, however, that there are other passions against which in some men the struggle is longer and fiercer; and then again we cannot limit our attention to these grosser temptations. There are temptations which are closely connected with the development of the higher part of a man's nature. Every moral conquest brings subtler temptations with it—spiritual pride, love of power, love of everything good (other than the supreme good) above its true value, at the wrong time, in the wrong place. It would not be a note of perfection but of imperfection not to feel temptations such as these. However attenuated in the higher characters the struggle may become (though I am not sure that it is in the highest characters that the struggle is mildest), still the mere feeling that something which is not right would be in itself very nice is enough to preclude the possibility of absolutely unruffled 'harmony,' and to compel us to regard self-sacrifice as a necessary element in all Morality as it exists under present human conditions. And that brings me to my second point.

(2) The extinction of self-sacrifice is inconsistent with the nature of things—with the actual conditions of life on this planet.

Even Aristotle admitted that it was only under perfectly favourable circumstances that the exercise of Virtue brought with it complete and perfect εὐδαιμονία. 'External supplies to a greater or a lesser extent' were necessary—freedom from pain and grave misfortune; free scope for the energies and activities, moral and intellectual, in the exercise of which true happiness was to be found. And this was not all. There was at least one virtue whose exercise was normally painful. The courageous man would no doubt feel the joy of battle; he would feel pleasure at the accomplishment of his desire to do brave deeds: but toil and wounds and death were not less painful to him than to other men—nay, more so, inasmuch as it is to the best men that life is most desirable[1]. Now the

[1] Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* III. 9 (p. 1117 *b*). The passage concludes: οὐ δὴ ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς ἀρεταῖς τὸ ἡδέως ἐνεργεῖν ὑπάρχει, πλὴν ἐφ' ὅσον τοῦ τέλους ἐφάπτεται. The last words contain the truth which the psychological Hedonists and the 'self-realizers' exaggerate. They forget that this pleasure is often, as Aristotle points out, very small in comparison with the surrounding pain.

absence of favourable circumstances, which from the point of view of the affluent Greek gentleman might be fairly treated as exceptional, is in truth with the mass of human beings the normal state of things. What presented itself to Aristotle as a somewhat anomalous characteristic of a particular virtue is, to an age which recognizes social obligations in excess of Aristotle's standard, the normal accompaniment at least of the higher kinds of moral effort. The virtue no doubt brings pleasure, but the circumstances of the struggle are painful. Opposition, unpopularity, failure, ill health, boredom, monotony—these at the lowest (to say nothing of the graver ills of more strenuous and heroic lives) good men must normally be prepared to face in greater or less degree, and the acceptance of such evils—often the direct consequence of their goodness—constitutes self-sacrifice. The amount of such things which the good man has to face varies no doubt enormously. A man is not *necessarily* to be thought less good because the circumstances of his life make the exercise of his capacities pleasant and interesting to himself: but still in a rough way it is true that what are in our view the noblest qualities of human character—less so no doubt in Aristotle's view, still less so in that of modern paganizing Moralists—have normally to be exhibited in ways which involve a good deal that is unpleasant. And in the most fortunate lives the mere necessity of working when one is tired would be enough to prevent our taking the pleasantness of our activity as an all-sufficient index of the degree to which a virtuous 'habit' has been formed. Aristotle, it is probable, would hardly have recognized under normal circumstances the necessity of a man working when he would rather rest. It is doubtful whether even a leading statesman in ancient Athens was required to pass many more hours in an office than was agreeable and hygienic: and as to theoretic activities, why should a Greek gentleman of independent means (and no one else could be truly virtuous), who studied, and researched, and talked for his own pleasure and not for the sake of others, go on thinking or reading or writing when he was tired? In Aristotle's view working when one was tired might be left to slaves By any one who is

not prepared to admit either that it is always right to stop work when one is tired, or that physical weariness is a sign of moral imperfection, the idea of the complete correspondence between duty and inclination, even in the best men, must be given up. And if so, we must look upon self-sacrifice as no mere accidental, temporary, or occasional accompaniment of Morality, but as a very important element in the normal virtuous life. Inasmuch as it asserts this fact, the popular tendency to identify Morality with self-sacrifice possesses far more and far deeper truth than the 'self-realization' doctrine of our ethical exquisites.

(3) The attempt to banish self-sacrifice from the virtuous life is inconsistent with the structure of human society.

The nature of man and of his material environment is such, we have seen, that even the effort to develope his own highest capacities cannot always, even in the best men, be altogether free from painful struggle. Still more obvious and still more serious is the collision between the claims of the individual and the claims of his fellows. The fullest development of what might (apart from such social considerations) be regarded as the highest capacities of the individual is, not exceptionally but normally, inconsistent with the development of those same capacities in others. Both the material and the higher interests of mankind constantly demand of the individual the sacrifice of his personal culture and self-development—physical, emotional, and (in a sense) even moral, i. e. many sides of character which it would in the abstract be good to cultivate. The fullest development of the individual must be sacrificed in order that there may be some development of other individuals. Or, if we say that the social self which is cultivated by the sacrifice of intellectual growth and emotional culture is after all the highest self, still the sacrifice of lower capacities to capacities in themselves good and noble must be made long before the point at which it could be said that they positively interfere with the higher, except in so far as their further cultivation is incompatible with the highest principle of all—the principle of submission to that moral Reason which dictates the subordination of the individual's good to the requirements

of social Well-being. If that 'harmony' or wholeness in the moral life on which it is the fashion to insist means the subordination of all other impulses to this, then indeed the harmony is possible. If it is this self that is to be 'realized,' then indeed self-realization is possible, but such a self-realization is necessarily also a limitation: it involves, that is to say, much of what ordinary men call self-sacrifice—sacrifice not merely of the bad self but of much that is intrinsically good and noble [1]. There is no realization of the 'self' as a whole, or even of the 'higher self' as a whole: and, if that is so, it were best surely to avoid putting forward the catch-word 'self-realization' as the essential feature of the moral life.

IV

And yet, as I have already endeavoured to show, the ideal of self-sacrifice, though it undoubtedly insists on what is from a practical point of view a more important aspect of the moral life than 'self-realization,' is no less one-sided. It fails to express the fact that Morality is the individual's highest good and is therefore not altogether sacrifice: and it fails to express the truth that the ideal life does include other elements besides self-sacrificing social service—some of them elements of high intrinsic worth. How then are we to reconcile these two principles? The general line of the reconciliation cannot be doubtful if there be any truth in the conclusions which we have tried to establish. Reason clearly pronounces that even what would otherwise be the highest good of the individual ought to give way to the like good of others. If so, it is clear that individual self-development [2] ought to bow to the claims of the like self-development in others; and from that it follows that the individual must find his own highest good in the cultivation of such capacities as can

[1] 'The hardest choice which Christian self-denial imposes is the preference of the work apparently most socially useful to the work apparently most conducive to the agent's own scientific and aesthetic development' (Sidgwick, *Ethics of Green*, p. 70).

[2] In future I shall use this word alone, as it seems to me to express all that there is of real meaning in 'self-realization,' while free from some of the objections that have been urged against that term, even as expressing a one-sided aspect of Morality.

be subordinated to the supreme requirements of social Well-being. The kind and the limits of this self-development and the self-sacrifice which this principle will demand of the individual will depend on the nature of his vocation. But, in view of the prominent place which this question has assumed in recent ethical speculation, it will be well to develope a little further our attitude towards it. Mr. Bradley has made the alleged inconsistency between the claims of self-development or (as he sometimes prefers to call it) self-assertion and self-sacrifice into a ground for preferring an accusation of hopeless and irresolvable internal contradiction or 'dualism' in the deliverances of the practical Reason. Our moral ideas are therefore doomed to go the way of the rest of human knowledge, and are pronounced to belong to the region of mere 'Appearance,' not of true knowledge—the knowledge of 'Reality.' A brief examination of this thesis may serve to elucidate what has already been said on this subject.

Here are Mr. Bradley's words:—

'I am far from suggesting that in morality we are forced throughout to make a choice between such incompatible ideals. For this is not the case, and, if it were so, life could hardly be lived. To a very large extent by taking no thought about his individual perfection, and by aiming at that which seems to promise no personal advantage, a man secures his private welfare. We may, perhaps, even say that in the main there is no collision between self-sacrifice and self-assertion, and that on the whole neither of these, in the proper sense, exists for morality. But, while admitting or asserting to the full the general identity of these aspects, I am here insisting on the fact of their partial divergence. And that, at least in some respects and with some persons, these two ideals seem hostile no sane observer can deny.

'In other words we must admit that two great divergent forms of moral goodness exist. In order to realize the idea of a perfect self a man may have to choose between two partially conflicting methods. Morality, in short, may dictate either self-sacrifice or self-assertion, and it is important to clear our ideas as to the meaning of each. A common mistake is to identify the first with the living for others, and the second with living

for oneself. Virtue upon this view is social, either directly or indirectly, either visibly or invisibly. The development of the individual, that is, unless it reacts to increase the welfare of society, can certainly not be moral. This doctrine I am still forced to consider as a truth which has been exaggerated and perverted into error. There are intellectual and other accomplishments, to which I at least cannot refuse the title of virtue. But I cannot assume that, without exception, these must all somehow add to what is called social welfare; nor, again, do I see how to make a social organism the subject which directly possesses them. But, if so, it is impossible for me to admit that all virtue is essentially or primarily social. On the contrary, the neglect of social good, for the sake of pursuing other ends, may not only be moral self-assertion, but again, equally under other conditions, it *may* be moral self-sacrifice. We can even say that the living "for others," rather than living "for myself," *may* be immoral and selfish.'

* * * * *

'The ends sought by self-assertion and self-sacrifice are, each alike, unattainable. The individual never can in himself become an harmonious system. And in the wider ideal to which he devotes himself, no matter how thoroughly, he never can find complete self-realization. For, even if we take that ideal to be perfect and to be somehow completely fulfilled, yet, after all, he himself is not totally absorbed in it. If his discordant element is for faith swallowed up, yet faith, no less, means that a jarring appearance remains. And, in the complete gift and dissipation of his personality, *he*, as such, must vanish; and, with that, the good is, as such, transcended and submerged. This result is but the conclusion with which our chapter began. Goodness is an appearance, it is phenomenal, and therefore self-contradictory. And therefore, as was the case with degrees of truth and reality, it shows two forms of one standard which will not wholly coincide. In the end, where every discord is brought to harmony, every idea is also realized. But there, where nothing can be lost, everything, by addition and by rearrangement, more or less changes its character. And most emphatically no self-

assertion nor any self-sacrifice, nor any goodness or morality, has, as such, any reality in the Absolute. Goodness is a subordinate and, therefore, a self-contradictory aspect of the universe[1].'

I must not now attempt to discuss as a whole the metaphysical position of the most brilliant and original thinker of our time. I venture only to make a few remarks exclusively upon the ethical side of the difficulty here presented:

(1) I trust it will not be thought in any way disrespectful to Mr. Bradley if I say that the whole of this charge of 'inconsistency' in the deliverances of the Practical Reason seems to me to turn upon a confusion between the idea of good and the idea of right. Mr. Bradley's doctrine is not merely that each of these modes of action is good, but that they are *equally* virtuous and right[2]. If Practical Reason really said that two inconsistent courses of action were both right, its 'dualism' would no doubt be hopeless enough. But there is no inconsistency in saying that two things are both good, though (where you cannot have both) it is right to choose that which is best. And Practical Reason, as I hold, does not pronounce that self-development and self-sacrifice are both right in all circumstances. It pronounces—to my mind unequivocally—that it is always right to choose that which is from the universal point of view the greatest of goods: and, though to determine what is the greatest of goods constitutes the gravest of practical difficulties, Reason is not essentially incapable of this task of distinguishing the value of goods, and so of pronouncing which of two courses is for a given individual under given circumstances the one and only right course of action.

Therefore, if the question be put nakedly, 'Which is to give way — self-assertion to self-sacrifice or self-sacrifice to self-assertion—when there is a collision between a smaller good of mine and a larger good of my neighbours?' I have no hesitation in saying that it is I and not Society that should be sacrificed. Or, if it be said that this is begging the question whether my intellectual cultivation may not be sometimes the greater good of the two, I should contend that no self-development of mine can

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, Ed. ii, pp. 415–420.
[2] Ib., p. 418.

ever be so great a good as to justify me in pursuing it to the total neglect of all social considerations. It has, indeed, to be admitted that men's capacities are not equal; and that unequal capacity does, in the abstract, constitute unequal value. One person may be entitled to more consideration than another; and it may be urged, as a speculative possibility, that there might be a person of such exalted capacities that his intellectual well-being might be held to justify an exclusive devotion to his own improvement; but then I should hold (*a*) that even then the subordination of his own self-development to that of his fellows would always be demanded in the interest of his own highest Well-being, for the man's capacity for love and social service is higher than any intellectual capacity however exalted; and (*b*) that practically there are no such monsters of intellectual superiority. Even if it were suggested that the majority of his countrymen were so much inferior to him that the claim of their development could not practically count in comparison with his own, yet there must be at least a minority whose capacities must be such as to enter into some sort of comparison with his own. These at least must be considered, nor should I for one admit that any human beings were so low in the scale of creation as to be of no importance at all, though undoubtedly they may be of smaller importance than others. Practical Reason demands some measure of self-sacrifice of the highest towards the lowest. To hold otherwise would be to hold that they might lawfully be treated as mere ὄργανα—instruments of the higher culture of their betters—in other words, be made their slaves [1]. Possibly, some of the apostles of self-realization might not shrink from the conclusion that this is (in principle) the true function of 'the lower classes' in a modern society. At all events there is a very observable tendency for a hyper-intellectual ideal in Ethics to associate itself with anti-popular or reactionary political views.

(2) If as a matter of fact Society were so constituted that

[1] This has been practically maintained by Nietzsche, who often says straight out what some of our English self-realizers only hint. He carries his principle out to its logical consequence, and appears to hold that the true ultimate end is the enslavement of the whole world to a single purely egoistic 'Übermensch.' Any one who is inclined to take Nietzsche seriously should read the scathing criticism by Hartmann in *Ethische Studien*, pp. 34-69.

the cultivation of the higher intellectual or artistic capacities really had no tendency to promote the good of any one but the possessor of them, the position would be an awkward one. So far as one can answer hypothetical and abstract questions which postulate a human nature different from any we know, I should be prepared to say, 'In that case, to the extent of the incompatibility between social and private good, the higher faculties must remain uncultivated.' On that supposition intellectual cultivation must simply be treated as we treat those lower goods the enjoyment of which by one is normally inconsistent with their enjoyment by another: each must take his just share and no more. The share may vary with the individual's capacity, but in no case can we rationally allow one man to be treated as an end only, while another is treated merely as a means to his enjoyment. Even on this supposition, there would be no formal 'dualism' in the moral judgement: the ethical problem would still be answered. But we should in that case have to admit that some of the highest desires and impulses of our nature would be divided against themselves; that some of the highest capacities in the race (and not only in the individual) would have to go unrealized; that some of the highest values in human life would be known only, from the point of view of Ethics, as values condemned on account of their conflict with yet higher values. But, as a matter of fact, the true Well-being of human society does not demand this vast sacrifice of intellectual goods. In a number of distinct ways the highest intellectual goods do conduce to social Well-being, and so are not incompatible with the attainment by the individual of that other and higher good which lies in the subordination of self to others.

It will be unnecessary to dwell at length upon the high intellectual qualities which are cultivated and exercised by callings useful in the most commonplace sense of the word—in political life, in administration, in literature, in Physical Science and its more advanced applications, in the professions, in the mere giving of amusement. But it must not be forgotten that in our view the true good of human society does not consist either in mere 'edification' or in the enjoyment of material good things. The cultivation of the intellectual and artistic faculties

is itself part of the social end. Consequently, the man who in any way communicates the results of his intellectual activity to the world is thereby performing his share of social service, and the subordination of his own ends to those of others involved in such communication will effect that reconciliation between 'self-assertion[1]' and self-sacrifice which his own moral life demands. And fortunately things are so constituted that the development of the intellectual and aesthetic nature in the many to that moderate pitch which seems alone to be practicable in their case imperatively demands a much higher cultivation of them in the few. The pleasure and the culture which the average man derives from an occasional visit to a picture gallery, and from the constant contemplation of good copies or less valuable originals on private walls, is only possible if the Artist is allowed to devote a laborious lifetime to the study and practice of Art. The comparatively uneducated can only find intellectual enjoyment if there is a leisured literary class to produce books for them to read; and the leisured literary class that produces the books which such men actually read, if they are good of their kind, is one which could not itself exist unless there were a small class in which a still higher, or at least a less popular and more specialized, culture or learning prevailed. The teacher must know more than those whom he teaches; the writer must know more of his particular subject than the average reader; the man of letters utilizes and absorbs the labours of numerous specialists. The maintenance, in short, of a highly cultivated class is an absolutely essential condition of healthy cultivated life in the nation at large. And the study of History would further seem to suggest that the connexion between intellectual health on the one hand and social and moral Well-being on the other is much closer than is sometimes supposed. The attempt to substitute an ideal of pure Morality for an ideal of wider human good, the attempt to confine culture within the limit wherein it directly subserves personal goodness, is always suicidal. The 'dark age' was an age of moral anarchy and wickedness. The moral and religious progress of the twelfth

[1] Mr. Bradley more often uses the word 'self-assertion' than 'self-realization,' but he does not appear to attach importance to the distinction.

and thirteenth centuries was intimately connected with a great intellectual revival. Moral progress is largely dependent on intellectual progress, and it is impossible to determine in advance what kinds of intellectual advance will react on ethical ideals and ethical practice. But nothing can be further from my intention than to rest the defence of intellectual pursuits upon their moral influence in the narrow sense, i. e. their tendency to promote for Society some good other than themselves. The different elements in human Well-being can undoubtedly exist to some extent apart. Intellectual development is none the less a part of the true ideal for society or individual because it is not the whole good or the highest good of human life. The ideal which would pronounce moral a life of absolutely self-centred culture or study is to my mind an irrational and immoral one[1]. But the student even of the most 'useless' branches of knowledge can socialize and moralize his life by communicating his discoveries or stimulating other students, even though the gain to the world may be a purely intellectual gain, and though the persons capable of directly and immediately benefiting by his work may be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is no paradox to say that there is nothing more useful to the world than 'useless' knowledge.

In no case, then, can it be right for a man to disregard social Well-being. In many cases a man's social duty may consist, so far as is compatible with the ordinary duties of the man and the citizen (themselves involving, of course, some measure of self-sacrifice), for the most part in the highest intellectual self-development. Even the man of genius must renounce that exceptional license to be immoral which the ideal of self-realization sometimes seems disposed to concede to him. And generally of course the communication to the world of the results of his studies on which I have insisted will take off something from the absolutely possible maximum of intellectual development – something varying

[1] Here for once (which is very rarely the case) I prefer Mr. Bradley's earlier to his later self: 'It is quite clear that if anybody wants to realize himself as a perfect man without trying to be a perfect member of his country and all his smaller communities, he makes what all sane persons would admit to be a great mistake' (*Ethical Studies*, p. 182).

from an occasional week spent in the sort of literary composition or proof-reading which does not promote intellectual advancement to the self-sacrifice of the man who deliberately accepts a far lower position than he might have achieved as a scholar or a thinker to make himself an effective teacher or the apostle of some unpopular cause. It is unnecessary to dwell on the compensating gain which human interest and practical sympathies bring to the student even within the intellectual sphere itself. It is perhaps only in the region of the most purely physical sciences that there is no such compensation, and in the pursuit of these sciences complete detachment from all human interests is for the most part avoided by the enormous possibilities of conquest over Nature which they bring to the life of man, and by the much greater opportunities of really adding to the intellectual wealth of the world which are in this region open to the most commonplace student than is the case in the 'humaner' studies. The student of many other subjects may be weighed down by the consciousness that the world really wants no more books of the kind that he can write; but the world can never know too many facts of physical Science or despise the attempts at scientific explanation which lie within the reach of every competent investigator.

Thus, when we turn from the individual to the society, there is no ultimate collision between intellectual self-development and that positive moral goodness of which self-sacrifice is the negative side. For the individual there is no doubt a collision; but the problem which the collision raises is one which Reason is not incompetent to solve. Reason recognizes that the direction and the degree of each individual's capacities must be, if he wants to be moral, limited by the equal value of the like capacity in others. And, that being so, it follows that the highest life for the individual is only attainable by that subordination of self to Society which constitutes self-sacrifice. The measure and degree of that sacrifice must itself be determined by the requirements of social Well-being. Each individual must develope the capacities which will realize on the whole the good of greatest intrinsic worth [1], having

[1] To avoid repetition I ignore the question of distribution of good which has already been dealt with in Book I, chap. viii.

regard to the fact that social good is best realized on the whole by some specialization of social function. If there be any truth in the theory of Vocation, Reason is not incompetent to determine what, under a given set of circumstances, is the vocation of the individual. The course dictated by that principle, the particular balance between self-development and self-assertion which in each case social Well-being demands, is the one and only course which for that individual is *right*.

So far I have felt bound to deal with Mr. Bradley's indictment against the Practical Reason. I have tried to show that Practical Reason is never reduced to saying, 'Two inconsistent plans of life are good, and I cannot decide which of them is the right one for any individual at any one time to adopt.' If that be established, that is as far as it is necessary to carry the discussion in any ethical interest. Into the wider metaphysical implications of the controversy it is not necessary to go at the present moment. I need only remark that if the ethical question is not beyond the capacities of the Practical Reason, any metaphysical conclusions which may be based upon the assumption of its irreconcilable dualism must so far be unfounded. If the position which I have taken up be accepted, the allegation of self-contradiction in the moral consciousness can only come to this—that there are many things which would be good if the nature of things had only not made their enjoyment incompatible with the enjoyment of still better things. Under these circumstances the question may be raised, 'Are they really good?' How that question may be answered is a matter of no directly ethical importance. The only metaphysical consequence which might result from the admission that one good is sometimes incompatible with another would be the admission that it is possible to conceive of a better world than actually exists. This is a position which it is no doubt highly unphilosophical to adopt at a period when a 'cheap and easy optimism' is regarded in many quarters as almost essential to the philosophical character. But it is a position with which few will quarrel except professed Philosophers. But, once more, any ethical difficulties that may remain about this collision between self-realization and self-assertion, when once we have got rid of the confusion already pointed out, are difficulties created for Ethics by Mr. Bradley's particular system

of Metaphysic—not difficulties created for Metaphysic by Ethics. From the ethical point of view there is no difficulty about the admission that goods are sometimes inconsistent with one another. So long as it is admitted that it is possible to choose the greatest good, and that such a choice—and this only—is always right, there is no latent contradiction in our ethical judgements: and, if that be admitted, one at least of the counts in Mr. Bradley's indictment against Reason is pronounced bad.

V

Since the greater part of this chapter was written Mr. Bradley's thesis has received an elaborate development at the hands of Professor A. E. Taylor. My reply to Professor Taylor's argument is substantially the same as that which I should make to Mr. Bradley, with this addition, that in Professor Taylor's case it is much more easy than in Mr. Bradley's to reply to him out of his own mouth. Mr. Bradley evidently does believe in the 'duality' or internal contradiction of the Practical Reason, and he does not believe in either of his fundamentally opposed ethical creeds overmuch. I do not mean, of course, that he is practically indifferent to ordinary moral interests, but he is not one of those thinkers in whose speculative outlook confidence in the dictates of the Practical Reason occupies a paramount position. In Professor Taylor, however, the divorce between the man and the philosopher is carried much further than with Mr. Bradley. Professor Taylor as a man is evidently inclined to an enthusiastic belief in the Practical Reason. So long as he confines himself to the ethical point of view, he demonstrates with admirable effect the unreality of the alleged ethical antinomy. He shows—nobody more conclusively—that neither the ideal of self-realization nor the ideal of absolute and exclusive self-sacrifice is Morality as we know it. He is never tired of exhibiting the fact that each of these ideals pushed to its logical extreme would land us in what every unsophisticated Conscience would pronounce to be hopelessly and irredeemably irrational and immoral. The true moral ideal includes both elements: a truly moral man will choose now one, now the other, whenever

(which, after all, is the exception rather than the rule)[1] there is a real necessity of choosing between them. If Professor Taylor has not done much to analyse the principles upon which the moral consciousness chooses between the two, he constantly assumes that it is possible to choose, and that there is a right and a wrong answer to the question. Some of the alleged contradictions find admirable solutions in Professor Taylor's own pages. It is only in exceptional cases that he even alleges that there is any real difficulty in making a right choice; and the existence of such difficult cases is no argument against the inherent capacity of the moral consciousness or the validity of its decisions, any more than the difficulty of discovering the laws of Nature, or the existence of different opinions on historical problems, is an argument against the validity of physical law or the existence of objective historical truth. Sometimes, indeed, it seems difficult to acquit Professor Taylor of failing to see (or perhaps of finding it convenient to ignore) the difference between the claim of validity for the moral judgement as such and the claim for personal infallibility or omniscience on the part of the individual Conscience. At all events it is only on the basis of such a confusion that the existence of difficult questions of Casuistry on which no wise or charitable man will care to pronounce with much confidence--still less to judge severely those who pronounce otherwise--can be regarded as the smallest argument for an inherent and irremovable internal contradiction in the moral consciousness itself.

VI

There is one other view connected with the collision between self-development and self-sacrifice about which I should like to add a word. It is sometimes assumed as a sort of postulate that the good must be good not only for one but for all—that there can be no real discord between my good and another's. We have already adopted many positions which preclude us from

[1] 'There is probably no single virtue of all those recognised by popular nomenclature which can be satisfactorily accounted for by either the requirements of full self-development or of social justice considered by themselves' (*The Problem of Conduct*, p. 218).

sharing that assumption. It is one which is hardly intelligible except upon the assumption that the good will is the only true good. If things like pleasure and Culture are admitted to be good, the assertion that one man's pleasure or culture cannot be inconsistent with another's is clearly opposed to experience. To say that, when the enjoyment of such things by the individual is inconsistent with the good of another, it is not really good for the former, implies that confusion between the idea of good and the idea of right which lies at the root of so much chaos in more than one system of Moral Philosophy. If the distinction between good and right is to be kept up, it is clear that it is often right for the individual to make a sacrifice which is not for his good *in all respects*. Inasmuch as the doing right is for him the highest good, he does promote his own highest good by the sacrifice: but to say that it is not a sacrifice of good is to deny that the conception of good is logically prior to that of right. I fail to see how any clear ethical thinking is possible except upon the assumption that many things are good which nevertheless the actual conditions of life prevent our attaining, and that therefore the only possible object of moral effort is to attain the greatest possible good—not all conceivable good. It may no doubt for some extra-ethical reason be held that there is a sense in which, when the right course has been chosen, we must assume not merely that the adoption of that course is the greatest good attainable by the individual in the given circumstances, but that all its consequences and concomitants—as well those in spite of which it is chosen as those for which it is chosen—are wholly good, and involve no evil at all to any one. But that is a metaphysical theory with which we are not now concerned: and it is so far from being a necessary postulate for Ethics that it may rather be pronounced to be unethical or anti-ethical. There are many bad things in the world besides bad voluntary actions; some of the consequences of the best actions are consequences which our judgements of value undoubtedly pronounce to be bad. If any one pronounces that they are nevertheless very good, that is an assertion which cannot be made on ethical grounds; it must be maintained on the basis of some Metaphysic (like that of Mr. Bradley) which denies the ultimate validity of our moral

judgements, not from the point of view of those who believe in the validity of our practical judgements. To this subject I hope to return in the chapter on 'Metaphysic and Morals.' Meanwhile, a word must be said about a form of this denial of all collision between my good and another's which does rest apparently upon purely ethical grounds[1].

The assumption that what is good for one man must be good for all has found its most explicit expression in that theory of the 'common good' which plays so large a part in the ethical teaching of Green and his followers. The phrase 'common good' is so loosely used by Green himself that it is sometimes doubtful whether to him it always meant anything more than 'the general good[2]'; but, in other passages and still more as used by the disciples who have turned Green's vague but stimulating Mysticism into hard and rigid dogmas, it is quite clear that the idea of the common good means something which is equally my good and that of every one else. Nothing, it is assumed, can be moral which produces any evil

[1] To meet an objection which would, I think, here be irrelevant, I may say that I fully recognize that in strictness nothing can be good for one person which is not a good absolutely, since the term 'good' always implies objectivity; but, since nothing can (as it seems to me) be good but a state of some consciousness, I think it would be pedantic to object to calling a good state of a certain person's consciousness 'his good' or a 'good for him,' even where that good involves a greater evil in some other consciousness.

[2] Sidgwick points out how far Green is from consistently maintaining this idea of a 'common good.' After quoting Green's account of the just man as one who 'will not promote his own wellbeing or that of one whom he loves and likes . . . at the cost of impeding in any way the wellbeing of one who is nothing to him but a man, or whom he involuntarily dislikes,' he remarks, 'How, after writing this description of an ideally just man, Green could possibly go on to say (§ 232), that "the distinction of good for self and good for others has never entered into that idea of a true good on which moral judgments are founded," I cannot imagine' (*Ethics of Green*, p. 67). If Green were prepared to stick to the position that there is no good but a good will, the contention that one man's good can never be incompatible with that of another might be plausibly (only plausibly) made, but the extravagance of the position becomes glaring when (as he often does) Green includes Art and Science in his conception of the end in spite of his declaration that 'the only good which is really common to all who may pursue it, is that which consists in the universal will to be good' (*Prolegomena*, § 244).

at all for any living soul[1]. Now I readily admit—and of course from a practical point of view it is most important to insist—that it is a characteristic of the higher goods that they are capable of being enjoyed by a larger number of persons than the lower. In promoting knowledge I am not promoting something which is necessarily my gain and another's loss. I am exercising my faculties, attaining my good, getting my enjoyment (or, as our friends will have it, 'realizing' my higher self) by the very same acts which are also adding to the common intellectual wealth of the world. Knowledge is not a thing which, like champagne or plum-pudding, becomes less by being shared. My enjoyment of Shakespeare does not diminish the amount of Shakespeare which there is to be enjoyed by others: rather it has a tendency, so far as my conduct has any effect on others, to stimulate, encourage, and facilitate in them the reading and appreciation of Shakespeare. No less clearly is that the case with a charitable action which 'blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' This very simple fact is, I take it, the real basis of the assumption that what is good for me to do cannot be bad for another. But I would observe that this is not universally the case even with the higher goods. A picture can, it is true, be looked at by several people at the same time, and by several hundred people one after the other, in the course of a day. Practically, a Londoner can get a sight of any particular picture in the National Gallery as often as he wants to see it. But, if the passion for Art were equally distributed throughout the inhabitants of the Metropolis, if every Londoner wanted to refresh his soul by gazing on a particular Turner once a week, the crowding around that picture would become highly inconvenient: the enjoyment of this privilege by one certainly would be incompatible with its equal enjoyment

[1] The assumption reminds me of the much-ridiculed doctrine of Mr. Herbert Spencer that 'conduct which has any concomitant of pain, or any painful consequence, is partially wrong' (*Data of Ethics*, p. 261). The extravagance is not really diminished when a similar assertion is made by those who exclude pleasure from their idea of good. Many right acts—the preaching of really good sermons, for instance—often do some moral harm to persons to whom they do not happen to appeal.

by others. Even as matters actually stand, it is not the case that the accumulation of pictures in Trafalgar Square is a 'common good' to the world in general. What is London's gain is certainly Italy's loss, and cannot, except in a very restricted sense, be set down as Cornwall's gain. Still more easy is it to show that the enjoyment of higher goods by one involves a loss of lower goods by others. The Artists and the Connoisseurs eat and drink a good deal, and the necessity of supporting them adds to the toil and diminishes the profits or enjoyments of many thousand working men. Doubtless the encouragement of Art is good on the whole for the world, but it is not all gain. Moreover, it is important to remark that even in the typical case of the charitable act which 'blesses him who gives and him who takes,' the good of him who gives is not the same as that of him who takes. The good Samaritan gets exercise for his Benevolence, the man fallen among thieves gets the healing of wounds. The Surgeon exercises his intellectual faculties and professional skill; his patients benefit by that skill, but what they get is quite another good from his. This seems to make the term 'common good' unsuitable. The end of Morality is a just distribution of goods, not the simultaneous enjoyment by all of one and the same good.

In the case of those lower goods which nevertheless we have agreed to call good, it is clear that the enjoyment of a good by one is, not exceptionally but normally, incompatible with its enjoyment by another. Two men cannot eat the same cake. We all live at the expense of some one else's labour. No doubt it is true that if we look at the whole effect upon Society—at the whole social system or reciprocal exchange of services which Morality enjoins—we may say that when two men treat each other justly, the one gains as much in one way as he loses in another. The ideal of human society is precisely a state of things in which each contributes to the good of Society in one way as much as he gets from Society in another, and so helps to set up that 'kingdom of ends' in which we have already discovered the sanest and most workable of the Kantian formulae. And it is naturally an element of this ideal that, as far as possible, each should find his own pleasure in something

which is as good for others as for himself. But this is only an ideal, and the conditions of human life permit but a distant approximation to it. The harmonizing of one man's interest with that of another must to a very great extent be effected simply by the choice of the least evil—an evil which really is evil to some, though good for the whole.

I am not quite clear, however, whether in these somewhat obvious reflections I am not really expressing what is meant by many of those who profess the philosophy of the 'common good.' If I am doing so, I can only submit that the phrase 'common good' is badly chosen to express their meaning; and as used by some it certainly suggests the ideas which I have combated. The doctrine of the 'common good,' strictly interpreted, really implies Green's doctrine that nothing but the good will is good at all (for only so can it soberly be asserted that goods never collide with one another)—a doctrine in which many of those who inherit his phraseology decline to follow him. And the position of Green on this matter is really open to the very objection which he himself urged with so much force against Kant—the objection that it leaves the good will without content. This position is merely disguised by talking about 'character' or 'perfection' as the end instead of 'the good will.' If nothing but the good will is good, there is no reason why one act of will should be considered as better than another. And the good will is the only good of one man which can never be actually inconsistent with the like good in another; though after all it may be doubted whether one man's good will is actually in itself the good of another, and it is quite easy to imagine cases in which one man's moral good could only be promoted by the neglect of another's.

In some of the writers with whom the 'common good' theory is popular, it is connected with a further metaphysical theory—the theory that not only the good but the self which is to be realized is a common self—common to each individual and to 'the Absolute'—so that in promoting his own true good the individual is necessarily promoting the good of every other individual. And it is further suggested at times that it is only upon this assumption that there can be any logical basis for obedience to

the moral law. Altruism can only be justified by showing that it is really Egoism[1].

I have already touched on the metaphysical aspect of the theory, and shall return to it hereafter. But even if there be a sense in which we may treat individual men and women as being 'manifestations' or 'appearances' of an all-embracing Absolute, Ethics surely has to do with the 'manifestations' or 'appearances,' and not with the Unity. Ethics is concerned with the relations of these apparently different and mutually exclusive 'appearances': and it is impossible to give any meaning to the simplest ethical conceptions except upon the assumption that I and my neighbour are (for ethical purposes) different persons, and that my good is distinguishable from his good. I am told to promote my neighbour's good because, since I and my neighbour are really the same being, his good is really my good. But I may quite reasonably reply that upon that supposition I have only to promote my own good, and need not trouble about my neighbour's, for in promoting my own good I must necessarily be promoting his also. The theory can be used as a defence of Egoism quite as reasonably as against it. Nor does the consideration that I and my neighbour equally derive our being from the same Absolute seem to me to constitute any ground or basis for moral obligation which would not exist apart from that supposition. If all that is meant by the theory is that when the

[1] I have noticed above Mr. Bradley's use of this doctrine (Vol. I, p. 67), but the most explicit formulation of the assumption which I have met with is to be found in Bishop d'Arcy's *Short Study of Ethics* (pp. 102, 120 *et passim*). 'Why,' he says (p. 143), 'should a man sacrifice his desires for the sake of a common good? The religious view of morality answers the question at once: Because all are one in God, and the common good is the true good of every individual.' I should not deny the truth of the last proposition in a certain sense, because my moral consciousness does judge that action for the general good possesses value, but if my moral consciousness did not so judge, Bishop d'Arcy's Metaphysic certainly would not convince me of the duty. Would the Bishop (with Schopenhauer) hold that I must also impute to myself (and to the Absolute) my neighbour's sins? The last contention would seem to be quite as reasonable as the former. Dr. d'Arcy, being a Bishop, shrinks from pronouncing the absolute identity of every individual (good or bad) with his neighbour and with God (and uses the vague phrase 'one in God'), but his Logic requires the omission of the 'one in.'

idea of objectivity inherent in the very nature of all moral obligation is thought out to its logical consequences, it implies Theism, that is a doctrine with which I fully sympathize, and on which I hope hereafter to insist. But the idea of moral obligation is no deduction from the idea of God, whether conceived of in a purely theistic or in a more or less pantheistic sense. Rather it is one of those immediate data of consciousness from which the idea of God may be inferred. If the notion of obligation or intrinsic validity or objectivity were not inherent in the immediate affirmation of the moral consciousness, no demonstration of the metaphysical unity of God and man or self and neighbour could possibly put it there. If the practical Reason did not recognize an intrinsic value in my neighbour's personality, no demonstration as to the common metaphysical origin and the actual identity of the two selves could possibly convince me of such value. Ethical truths may, and, I believe, do, contain metaphysical implications; but no ethical truth can possibly be deduced from or proved by any metaphysical considerations which are not ethical. Ethical truth can rest upon nothing whatever but the actual deliverances of the moral consciousness. And the moral consciousness certainly knows nothing of any metaphysical identity between myself and my neighbour. On the contrary it assumes that we are two and not one. If in any sense it is to be shown that we are one, that is a position which must be established on grounds independent of Ethics.

VII

There is another conception of the ethical end which has many analogies with the ideal of 'self-realization.' Professor Simmel, the most brilliant of recent ethical writers, has attempted to find an ethical criterion in the idea of a 'maximum of Energy' (*Thätigkeit*)[1]. It is not merely pleasure which gives life its value; a life in which there is much pain and much pleasure would be positively better than one in which there is only

[1] *Einleitung*, I, p. 371 *sq.* He wholly fails to show that in any natural sense there is a greater 'Quantum von Zwecksetzung' (II, p. 359), or a 'Willensmaximum' in good rather than in bad conduct.

pleasure. The most desirable kind of life is one in which there are many ups and downs, plenty of excitement, many a 'crowded hour of glorious life,' a maximum 'swing' or oscillation between the heights of exaltation and the depths of depression[1]. Now in some ways it may be freely admitted that Simmel's ideal is a great improvement upon the ideal of 'self-realization.' His formula is far less of a mere form; it is to some extent a concrete ideal. And it emphasizes many points which we may recognize as important aspects of a high ethical ideal. Unlike the 'self-realization' ideal, it is not purely self-regarding: it is not only for himself that the good man will promote a 'maximum of activity,' but also for others; and there is no confusion between one's own good and that of others. Simmel's ideal man will promote the kind of life that has most value on the whole, though in particular cases he may judge that an exciting career for himself is really so good a thing that he may sacrifice to it large masses (as it were) of inferior life. Moreover, the doctrine exhibits impressively some of the differences which would exist in detail between a hedonistic standard of Ethics resolutely applied and one which recognizes other elements of value in human life besides pleasure. As against the ideal of 'harmonious development,' it insists that what is best in human life as we know it is often a state of violent internal discord, of struggle and unquiet, rather than of smug and contented spiritual self-complacency. And again it is valuable as a reminder that we cannot in the region of Ethics maintain a sharp and rigid distinction between ends and means; the means are part of the end. All ethical thought becomes, indeed, impossible, unless we do recognize a distinction between ends and means: it is because the end has value that the means to it are justified. But Moralists who have thoroughly grasped this doctrine are beset by the temptation to suppose that the character of the means is unimportant, and may be ignored in estimating the rightness or wrongness of the act. All human activity does, indeed, consist in the pursuit of ends, but the end is often in itself far less valuable than the pursuit. Human life consists chiefly in the

[1] '... die Schwingungsweite zwischen der Lust und dem Schmerz eines Lebens der Grösse seiner Thätigkeit proportional ist.' *Einleitung*, I, p. 388.

doing of things which are means to ends: the end must have value, but whether it is worth pursuing or not must depend very often upon the character of the activities which will lead to that end. From one point of view such activities must be looked upon as means; from another they are part of the end.

That is obviously the case even from the hedonistic point of view, as is seen most conspicuously in the case of games. 'Sport' has been well defined as the overcoming of difficulties simply for the sake of overcoming them: and from a non-hedonistic point of view it must be still more emphatically recognized that the activity which is involved in the pursuit of an end is often something much higher and more valuable than the end that it attains, as that end would be apart from the activity. Man does not live by bread alone. His energies are largely absorbed in the pursuit of bread, but the bread-winning is often a higher and nobler thing than the bread. The true good of human life (as we know it) does not consist in the pursuit of some end which we first pursue and then enjoy at leisure, but in activities which are constantly seeking to satisfy needs which, even if satisfied, are only supplanted by fresh needs. Both the enjoyment and the nobleness of life often lie in the pursuit. When people have no unsatisfied needs, they can only give a value to life by more or less successful efforts to invent new ones. Simmel's theory brings out, too, the fact that in detail the duty of one man—even, it may be said, the concrete ideal which it is right for one man to pursue—is not the same as that of another. It insists on the need for varieties of individual development and practical activity. All these elements of truth we may freely recognize in Simmel's formula, but when it is put forward as an exclusive and adequate ideal, it is too hopelessly vague to be worth serious examination. How can 'amount of activity' be measured? I can, indeed, compare the value of the very dissimilar activities; I can even by a considerable effort of abstraction estimate the amount of pleasure which there is in each. But how am I to say whether there is a greater quantity of activity in the most exciting kind of historical research or in a steeplechase, in Philosophy or in football? So far as quantities of activity can be estimated, no one probably ever crowded

more of it into his own life or caused more of it in others than Napoleon Buonaparte, but no one who attaches any meaning to the idea of Morality can well recognize in Napoleon his highest ethical ideal. Simmel's doctrine is one of those which spring from the desire to invent new theses, without which it is impossible to write sensational works on Moral Philosophy. The airing of new ideas is often, no doubt, more exciting, more full of activity (of *Thätigkeit*) than the elucidation, correction, and harmonization of older and truer ones. Acts can only be considered right or wrong relatively to some end other than the acts themselves, however true it may be that the will which wills that good is a greater good than the good which it wills. Neither 'duty for duty's sake' nor 'activity for activity's sake' is a rational ethical watchword, unless each is supplemented by the doctrine that the end which duty aims at promoting must be a good one, and that the 'activity' which is a good must be either part of the end which we pronounce good or a means to it. Such formulae as 'activity for the sake of activity' or 'self-realization' spring from an unwillingness to admit the simple, ultimate, and unanalysable character of the idea of good, without the admission of which there can be no such thing as Morality. The contents of our moral consciousness cannot be translated or paraphrased into any language which does not contain the word 'good' or its synonym.

Both the difficulties which have been raised as a ground for accusing Morality of internal contradiction, and some of those which lie at the root of Simmel's exaggerated theory of maximum activity, are, we have seen reason to believe, met by the due recognition of the fact that though duty is incumbent upon every one, though the good of society is the end for all, that good demands and includes a great variety of individual goods, and that not all these goods can either be promoted or enjoyed within the compass of a single life. This represents a side of ethical truth which is generally expressed by the doctrine that different men have different vocations—a doctrine which will be further examined and developed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

VOCATION

I

I HAVE tried to establish the position that acts are virtuous in so far as they tend to promote and to distribute justly a Well-being which consists in various elements possessing very different degrees of intrinsic value. The ideal life would be a life into which the different elements of 'good' should enter in the degree appropriate to their intrinsic worth; in which, roughly speaking, intellectual should be subordinated to moral well-being, while lower desires are indulged in such a way and to such an extent as are most conducive to the due predominance of the higher; or, more simply, in which every desire, every element in consciousness is accorded the place which is due to its own intrinsic worth. It might seem to follow that the ideal of Morality in its narrower sense, the ideal aim of the virtuous will, must be to realize these various 'goods' in proportion to their relative importance for each and every human being. But such an account of human duty takes no account of the fact that for Society in general the highest amount of good cannot be realized by each individual endeavouring to secure for himself and to promote for every other all sorts of good. In no one life is the gratification, in any high degree, of all even among the better desires possible; while the very attempt to gratify all equally makes impossible the attainment of any one of the best kinds of life. And, again, from the point of view of Society, a certain specialization of function, or what, looked at from the economic point of view, is known as division of labour, is equally imperative. Not only is it practically impossible for the same individual in every case to devote his time and energy to the promotion of highest and higher and lowest goods in

the proportion of their intrinsic worth, but even among goods of the particular rank which it is his social function to promote, he must devote himself to the promotion of some one particular good, if a maximum return, so to speak, is to be produced. The labourer must devote the bulk of his time not merely to producing food but to producing a particular kind of food. And the conditions of human life are, unfortunately, such that a very much larger proportion of the energies of most men have to be devoted to producing the lower kind of goods than to the production of the higher.

Moreover, this specialization of the good-producing energies of each individual carries with it a further specialization of the good which he must himself enjoy. For, though the abstraction is useful and legitimate for some purposes, we cannot treat the production of good as though it were really a totally distinct thing from the enjoyment of good; as though a man simply produced by his social activity one sort of good, while the good that he himself enjoys is something wholly distinct and separable from it, something produced by other people for him, and given to him in exchange for his services by the other members of his society, just as the wages received by a husbandman are something quite distinct from the corn which he produces. We have seen that a large part of the good which can be enjoyed in human life consists precisely in these socially directed activities. Both moral and intellectual goods are attained by contributing in some special way to the good of Society. And, consequently, if a man concentrates his energies on the production of some one kind of good, that will largely determine the nature of the good which he will enjoy, when good life comes to be looked at as the individual's share in a social Well-being. The nature of his contribution to social good must largely determine, so to speak, the nature of his dividend. If a man's social function is to plough the fields, that energy of ploughing will not be so much energy taken off from the production of higher good and concentrated on the production of lower, but it will determine to a large extent the nature of the Well-being that will fall to his share; for it is in and through this social function of ploughing that he will attain that highest good which consists in the

direction of his will towards good, or, more simply, in the performance of his duty. And, though in the particular case of ploughing, the limitations which it sets to intellectual activity are more conspicuous than the scope which it affords, it is none the less true that even mechanical occupations involve some intellectual activity. The ploughman, even when ploughing, is at least doing something that cannot be done by a beast. He will attain his highest good in ministering to the bodily wants of others; while, though it is obviously desirable that the ploughman should enjoy some of those higher goods of life which have no special relation to his function, the kind and amount of other goods—higher and lower alike—which will fall to his lot must be largely such as are incidental to or compatible with the occupation of ploughing. As compared with the town workman in a factory for instance, the country labourer enjoys a more varied and interesting occupation, an occupation which brings with it a greater variety of mental activities and a greater development of individual initiative, the pleasures and the health that come from life in the open air, the use of a less crowded house and a garden of his own; he cannot enjoy the social and political life, the social interests (outside his work) and the exciting amusements which partially atone to the townsman for the squalor and discomfort of his surroundings. Of course some of these limitations in either case are due to defective and improvable social arrangements; but it is clear that in any society different individuals must enjoy, as they promote, different kinds of good. Hence a large part of human duty consists in acts which are not the duty of all men. A large part of human duty consists in the duties of one's 'Vocation.'

It is not only in the discharge of his formal social function, the function which constitutes (as we say) his business or profession or 'state of life,' that there must be some specialization. Even in the kinds of good that it is not the business of any recognized profession to promote, it is clearly desirable and necessary that different men should contribute to social good in different ways. In philanthropy, in social service, in the choice between different modes of life, there is room for different vocations. An exhaustive

treatise on Casuistry would have to deal not merely with the duties of different vocations, but also with the question, on what principles a man should determine what is his social function, whether in the way of formal or official calling or in the direction of his own voluntary energies within the limits allowed by universally binding moral obligations and by those which are incident to his profession or occupation. Moreover, in resolving duty into an obligation to contribute to general Well-being, it is not merely the kind but the amount of such contribution that is undetermined. Here there is another group of questions upon which Moral Philosophy ought to have something to say, if it is to aim at a complete analysis of the contents of the moral consciousness. It must give some answer to the question, 'What are to be the limits of the individual's self-sacrifice?' And if there are limits which a man is not bound to pass, the question may further be raised whether he is at liberty, if he pleases, to do more? If not, must we admit that it is possible for a man to do more than his duty? Can there be works of Supererogation?

II

There is yet another reason for devoting some special consideration to this question of Vocation. In the question 'How am I to know and recognize my Vocation?' we have a peculiarly good illustration of the inadequacy of Intuitionism in any of its various forms to formulate the procedure by which reasonable men really do determine, and feel that they ought to determine, their duty under particular circumstances. This difficulty is well illustrated by the treatment of the subject by James Martineau, a writer whose Intuitionism takes the form of a theory that a man's duty is always that course of action to which he is prompted by the highest motive, a motive which is recognized as such by the immediate affirmation of Conscience. Let us see how such a test would work as applied to this very important duty—that of choosing one's Vocation rightly.

Martineau's ethical criterion is thus formulated: 'Every action is RIGHT which, in presence of a lower principle, follows a higher: every action is WRONG which, in presence of a higher

principle, follows a lower[1].' The moral order of precedence among the possible principles or 'springs' of action is elaborately determined by that writer, while immediately after the table in which he sums up the results of this enquiry there follows a section on the question, 'How far a Life must be chosen among these.' Martineau here distinctly faces the objection that it rests in great measure on our own action which motives shall be presented to the mind and which shall not. Unless the higher motive be actually present to the mind, the action motived by the lower 'spring' cannot, according to him, be wrong. 'Ought we to content ourselves,' he asks, 'with treating the springs of action as *our data*, with which we have nothing to do but to wait till they are flung upon us by circumstance, and then to follow the best that turns up?'[2] The objection could not be more aptly stated. Martineau meets it by admitting that 'if there be at the command of our will, not only the selection of the better side of an alternative, but also a predetermination of what kind the alternative shall be, the range of our duty will undoubtedly be extended to the creation of a higher plane of circumstance, in addition to the higher preference within it.' But on what principle is a man to make his choice between the higher and the lower 'plane of circumstance'? How is he to recognize the higher plane? From Martineau's fundamental principle it would seem to follow that a man is always bound to choose that 'plane of circumstance' on which he will be likely to find the higher motives streaming into his consciousness in the richest abundance and with the greatest force. Martineau himself raises the question: 'If compassion is always of higher obligation than the *love of gain* or *family affection*, how can a man ever be justified in quitting his charities for his business or his home?' But to this question he has supplied no adequate answer. The only way in which he strives to beat down the difficulty which he has himself so forcibly raised is by the contention that 'the limits . . . within which the higher moral altitudes can be secured by voluntary command of favouring circumstances are extremely narrow.'

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*, 3rd ed., II, p. 270.
[2] Ib., p. 267.

This view he supports by insisting upon the undoubted fact that a man cannot entirely alter his nature by artificial change of environment, upon the moral advantage of the 'various clashing of the involuntary and the voluntary,' upon the moral ill effects of setting aside 'relations human and divine' by the choice of an apparently higher walk of life. Now, in the first place, I remark that, in so far as a man deliberately turns a deaf ear to the solicitation of a higher motive from regard to the considerations insisted upon by Martineau, he is deserting the fundamental principle of the system. In urging a man to repress his benevolent aspirations for fear of the moral effects (social and personal) of the neglect of family relations and the like, Martineau is distinctly transferring the object of moral discrimination from the motives to the consequences of the alternative courses of action. He is deserting the Highest-motive criterion for the principle (to use terms invented by Sidgwick) of individualistic or of universalistic Perfectionism. He bids the seeker after moral truth in certain particular cases act upon the lower in preference to the higher motive;[1] and yet no adequate rules are given for the discrimination of these exceptional cases. If in one particular instance a man is permitted to disobey Martineau's fundamental canon from fear of the moral ill consequences which might subsequently ensue, how can he obey it in any case in which he foresees that the net moral results of acting on the higher motive will be less satisfactory than those which result from choosing the lower motive? The method of Ethics to which such a principle would lead would be a very different one from the method of introspection into motives.

But we must return to Martineau's contention 'that the limits within which the higher moral altitudes can be secured by a voluntary command of favouring circumstances are extremely narrow' Here I venture very decidedly to join issue. It is all very well to point to the moral failure of monastic systems, and the danger of neglecting natural 'relations, human and

[1] *Types*, II, p. 270. It might, indeed, be pleaded that the desire of doing right as such is higher than the benevolent desire; but Martineau does not admit the existence of a desire to do the right thing in general, as distinct from an impulse to satisfy some particular good desire.

divine'. But what relations does Martineau mean? It may be true that a man cannot desert 'his business or his home for his charities' without neglecting 'relations human and divine,' when once he has got a business or a home. But it rested with himself to create or not to create the business or the home in the first instance. And on what principles is he to decide whether to create them or not? Practically, Martineau's advice to any one in doubt as to the choice of an employment or profession seems to be, 'Don't choose one at all.' 'Let him accept his lot,' he tells us, 'and work its resources with willing conscience, and he will emerge with no half-formed and crippled character[1].' This might be good advice to one born heir to an estate or a great business; it would be intelligible advice—though there are cases in which its morality would be questionable—to a son brought up by an arbitrary father for a particular profession; but to the man who is really free to choose between half a dozen different 'lots,' and in anxious doubt which of them to adopt, the precept 'Accept your lot' will seem but a mocking echo of the problem that distracts him. If 'one's lot' means one's actual profession, the advice is meaningless to the boy or the man who has not entered upon any; if 'one's lot' means the lot to which one is called, the precise difficulty lies in knowing what that lot is. The maxim 'Perform the duties of your vocation' is of no use to a man grappling with the tremendous problem—to many a man th most difficult practical problem which he ever has to face—of finding out what his true vocation is.

The duty of choosing a profession has been well called—I think by Sir John Seeley—the most important of all duties, and the same writer very reasonably complains of the almost total neglect of this department of Ethics by Moralists. And the neglect is not the least conspicuous in the writers who most tend to limit the whole duty of man to the 'duties of one's station.' 'My Station and its Duties' is the title of the only chapter of *Ethical Studies* in which Mr. Bradley faces the question of the moral criterion. 'My station and duties' is the formula by which he seeks to answer that question; and yet

[1] *Types*, II, p. 270.

in the whole chapter there is not a word as to the principles upon which a man's station must be chosen except what is contained in the lines:—

> One place performs like any other place
> The proper service every place on earth
> Was framed to furnish man with[1].

It should be observed that this question of choosing a profession is precisely one to which the ordinary objections to the systematic treatment of questions of Casuistry do not apply at all. Against such a treatment it may plausibly be urged in ordinary cases that the decision, when the difficulty actually arises, has to be taken without prolonged and self-conscious deliberation; that to deliberate in the face of an apparent duty generally means to seek an excuse for evading it; that there is something morally unwholesome in elaborate introspection and self-analysis, and still more in the anticipation of abnormal moral perplexities, or even in dwelling upon them when they arise; and, finally, that the details of Morality as opposed to its general principles do not admit of scientific adjustment: 'the particulars are matters of immediate perception,' as Aristotle puts it[2]. But the choice of a profession is precisely a question which from the nature of the case *must* be deliberated on, and about which, in numerous instances, conscientious men do deliberate long and anxiously. Here, if anywhere, it would appear reasonable to expect that a system of Moral Philosophy might have some guidance to offer to anxious seekers after Right. Even if the scientific discussion of such a subject were of little direct use to the doubting Conscience of the individual (as no doubt must generally be the case with theoretical determinations of practical questions), it might at least be expected to be of some value in determining the advice which should be given to others upon a subject upon which more than on any other moral question men are wont at times to seek for counsel and advice. The Moral Philosopher as such is no more capable of answering such a question than any one else; but he ought surely to be able to point out the considerations upon which its solution turns, and so to state the question in a manner in which it admits of an

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 183.

[2] *αἰσθητὰ γὰρ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα.*

answer. I need hardly say that in the present chapter I make no pretension to contribute to the discussion of the subject anything which would be likely to be of much value either to enquirer or adviser in such cases. I merely wish to point out that the question of choosing a profession is a peculiarly good test of any philosophical criterion of Morality, and to show that Martineau's criterion is one which could not practically be applied to its determination, or at least that the results of its adoption would be such as would not commend themselves to the practical moral judgement of thoughtful and reasonable men.

It will be well perhaps, at this stage of my argument, to call attention to the psychological grounds upon which Martineau bases what I must respectfully call his evasion of this problem:

'The limits, however, within which the higher moral altitudes can be secured by voluntary command of favouring circumstance are extremely narrow. Go where we may, we carry the most considerable portion of our environment with us in our own constitution; from whose propensions, passions, affections, it is a vain attempt to fly. The attempt to wither them up and suppress them by contradiction has ever been disastrous: they can be counteracted and disarmed and taught obedience only by preoccupation of mind and heart in other directions. Nothing but the enthusiasm of a new affection can silence the clamours of one already there[1].'

Martineau's treatment of the whole subject seems to have been warped by the assumption that the only way in which a man can attempt to raise himself to 'the higher moral altitudes by the voluntary command of favouring circumstance' is by 'going out of the world' in the monastic sense. He insists with much force upon the folly of attempting to suppress the lower 'propensions, passions, and affections' by one tremendous sacrifice of the external goods or surroundings which seem most obviously to call them into activity. It is quite true that 'it is a vain attempt to fly' from one's natural 'propensions, passions, and affections,' by change of external environment; but it is entirely possible to give a wholly new direction to them by such a change.

[1] *Types*, II, p. 268.

It is precisely because 'the affections can be counteracted and disarmed and taught obedience only by preoccupation of mind and heart in other directions' that the influence of environment upon character is of such decisive importance. It is just because 'nothing but the enthusiasm of a new affection can silence the clamours of one already there,' and because some occupations are so much more favourable than others to the growth of 'new affections' of the right kind, that a man's character is so largely determined by himself—determined by himself, but determined in ordinary cases once for all—by the choice of his walk in life.

Without denying to every honourable and worthy calling either its characteristic virtues or its characteristic vices, it is surely undeniable that some professions are as a rule more favourable to the development of character than others. It is not to the purpose to allege that all callings are compatible with the highest Morality. Exceptional men may lead exceptional lives in any walk of life; the very obstacles to Virtue which some careers present will become so many occasions for moral achievement to those who are capable of triumphing over them. But we are not dealing with exceptional men, but with ordinary men, though (since *ex hypothesi* they are desirous of regulating their choice on the highest principles) with ordinary good men. And the characters of ordinary men are enormously moulded by their environment—by the nature of their work, by the people with whom it will bring them into contact, and by the nature of that contact. To such men when hesitating as to the choice of a profession such alternatives as these are constantly presenting themselves. A man hesitates between the profession of a physician and that of an officer, more or less clearly foreseeing that if he becomes an officer there lies before him (in time of peace) a life of idleness just disguised and sweetened by a moderate quantity of routine work, a life of comfort and pleasure, if not of luxury and self-indulgence, to say nothing of the actual temptations naturally associated with such a life. Against this there may seem to him (rightly or wrongly) little to be set except the rare opportunities of heroism and patriotic service which may from time to time present themselves in war. As a doctor there lies before him a life of hard work and great usefulness—a life in

which there will be daily and hourly calls for the exercise of sympathy, self-denial, and devotion. Or again, take the case of a man hesitating between the life of a parish clergyman and some commercial occupation. Of course the temptations of the highest callings—the degradation of the man who cannot in some measure rise to the moral level which they demand—are great in proportion to the opportunities which they offer. But it will hardly be denied that most men who have adopted the profession of a parochial clergyman from not wholly unworthy motives —sometimes even that exception might be omitted—are made better by the demand which such work incessantly creates for sympathy, for self-judgement, for moral effort, for charity in the highest sense of the word. How constantly does one find the highest qualities developed by a few years of serious clerical work among the poor in a man who certainly showed no signs of their possession as an undergraduate[1]? Can it be doubted that those virtues might very probably have remained, to say the least of it, equally dormant and unobtrusive had he gone into business? It is not, however, necessary for my argument to show that the actual moral performance of one profession is on an average superior to that of another, though I should myself have little doubt of the fact. The question is, whether some professions do or do not make greater and more frequent demands than others upon the higher 'springs of action' and so create a 'higher plane of circumstance.' Here I should have thought there could not be room for the smallest doubt. Professions which bring a man into contact with human suffering must surely more frequently suggest benevolent impulses than those whose work is done in the study or the office, whatever be the response which is actually made to such higher suggestions. Professions which offer opportunies for work not wholly dictated by personal interest call for these higher motives more frequently than work

[1] Of course, to other men the opposite choice might be morally the more successful. I am assuming the case of the man who possesses in some measure the particular capacities which clerical work might call out. It must be remembered that I am myself contending that the character of the 'springs of action' to which the work appeals is not the right principle on which to base the choice of a profession.

in which there is comparatively little room for any honesty except the narrow honesty which is the best policy. Professions which necessarily involve an attitude of antagonism to moral evil must clearly be more likely to excite those sentiments of compassion and reverence which Martineau places at the head of his table of 'springs of action' than professions in which the existence of evil is either kept out of sight or has for the most part to be accepted as a datum instead of being grappled with. If that be so, I cannot see how, on his principle, a man to whom the profession which will secure the presence of these higher motives has once suggested itself, could ever be justified in adopting one which will place him on a lower 'plane of circumstance.' Whether he possesses the capacity or taste for the work, whether it is probable that he will succeed in making as frequent response to these higher springs as he might make to the good but inferior springs of action suggested by work of a less morally exacting kind, whether he will be more useful to Society by adopting the calling which makes the greater demand upon the higher springs —all these are, as it seems to me, utilitarian considerations with which the Intuitionist of the 'highest motive' school cannot logically concern himself. Whether the moral value of the motives immediately prompting a man to choose the one calling or the other be considered, or whether we have recourse to Martineau's supplementary rule of choosing the 'higher plane of circumstance,' nothing could, as it seems to me, justify a man in choosing what we may for the sake of convenience call the lower profession in preference to the higher, but the fact that the desire of adopting the latter had never occurred to him, or that he had never had one moment's experience of those higher desires which would be gratified by the adoption of the higher profession. Exactly the same difficulties would arise if we assigned a higher value than Dr. Martineau to the intellectual and aesthetic impulses, and attempted to base the choice of a profession upon the extent to which it would promote the man's own self-development.

It must be remembered that the collision of motives respectively impelling a man to the choice of two alternative walks of life is not commonly limited to the collision between one higher

motive and one good but somewhat lower motive. Martineau, indeed, shows a disposition to deny the possibility of action impelled by a mixture of motives; but whatever be the case with actions actually performed, there can surely be no doubt that, so long as alternative courses are still in contemplation, it seldom happens that the man is impelled to the one or other course by one motive alone. This is eminently the case with the choice of a profession. Sometimes, indeed, some of the lowest inducements will persist in arraying themselves on the side of the highest of all. What more common in religious men than a coincidence between the 'love of power or ambition' (placed seventh on Dr. Martineau's list), or even 'love of gain,' and the promptings of 'compassion' or 'reverence'? So again in the familiar struggle between intellectual and philanthropic impulses, the lowest desires of all will commonly take the side of the former. 'Love of ease and sensual pleasure' will ally itself with 'love of culture' in deterring a man from those active professions to which he is prompted by 'generosity' and 'compassion' in the present, and in which those motives of action are likely to be most frequently called into activity in the future. It must be remembered that where a higher desire and the wish to provide for a future supply of such desires point one way, and the lower desires the other, the higher desire is by no means always a predominant, habitual, or overmastering desire. Where that is the case, it may be a man's duty to adopt it irrespectively of inclination. The thought of the higher vocation may, indeed, be a mere transient, intermittent aspiration. The man may shrink from the higher vocation (though willing to accept it if proved to be his duty) with an aversion in which dislike of its hardships, felt incapacity for its duties, and the overmastering attraction of some less exalted though not unworthy passion or ambition will mingle almost inextricably. Yet, if it be once admitted that the moral value of the impelling motives must determine the choice, it must follow that no man attracted to the army by 'love of power or ambition' could ever conscientiously devote himself to that profession if a 'love of culture' had once suggested to him the thought of being an artist; that no man who had ever felt

sincere compassion for the sorrows of the poor, and recognized the supreme nobleness of philanthropic work, could ever devote himself conscientiously to the cause of Science or learning; that no woman who had ever aspired after the usefulness of a hospital nurse or a schoolmistress could ever conscientiously consent to marry a squire or a man of business [1].

In fact, since the profession to which a man is most strongly attracted commonly presents itself to him in an agreeable light—i.e. as likely to satisfy some of his lower desires as well as one or more of the higher ones—it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that on Martineau's principles it will generally be a man's duty, when hesitating between two or more professions, to choose that which he dislikes most [2]. Such a preposterous conclusion would, of course, have been rejected by Martineau as emphatically as it would by any other sensible man. Yet from the perplexities and paradoxes which we have been considering there seems to be no way of escape so long as we confine ourselves to a purely subjective criterion, and refuse to consider the consequences of our action upon social Well-being.

It is true, indeed, that Martineau might point to not a few passages of his book where the calculation of consequences is admitted to have a place in morals; but the relation of the

[1] The following words from a letter of Ruskin may illustrate the situation I am contemplating: 'I am . . . tormented between the longing for rest and lovely life and the sense of this terrific call of human crime for resistance and human misery for help' (Collingwood, *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, 1893, II, p. 7). And yet it may be safely asserted that, even if we measured its value solely by its effects upon the condition of the poor, Ruskin's actual career accomplished far more than he would have done had he turned his back upon Literature and Art and devoted his life to some directly philanthropic cause: but such indirect social effects could not of course be expected in all cases.

[2] It is difficult to bring within Martineau's table some of the motives which frequently have most weight in disposing a man to one or other profession. Perhaps the strongest likings or dislikings for particular callings commonly rest upon a love of society or of society of a particular kind, or upon dislike of a particular kind of society. (By society I mean all kinds of intercourse with one's fellow men.) It is hard to explain such likings or dislikings by any of Martineau's 'springs,' whether taken singly or in combination. The only love of pleasure which he recognizes is 'love of *sensual* pleasure.'

'canon of consequences' to the canon of motives is nowhere adequately explained. In one passage[1], indeed, it is admitted that such a 'computation is already more or less involved in the preference of this or that spring of action; for, in proportion as the springs of action are self-conscious, they contemplate their own effects, and judgement upon them is included in our judgement of the disposition.' If this admission be pressed, it seems to me to amount to the practical adoption of a consequential or teleological criterion of the morality of at least all deliberate actions. All action must affect some one, and if a man is reflecting upon the course of conduct which it is right for him to pursue, it must surely occur to him that the consequences of one course of action will be more socially beneficial than those of another. How, then, can he fail to be moved to the adoption of that alternative by 'Compassion'? And Compassion[2] in the table before us takes precedence of all other springs of action except 'reverence.' Except, therefore, in so far as its dictates may be modified by those of reverence, compassion seems to be practically erected into the ethical criterion. This, however, is not explicitly admitted by the framer of that table, and we are obliged to assume that comparison of motives is meant to be his working criterion.

III.

It may be urged that, however unsatisfactory Martineau's criterion for the determination of cases of Conscience such as these may be, no more satisfactory guidance is to be obtained from any other. If we adopt tendency to promote social good (however understood) as our test, is not the difficulty, it may be asked, quite as great? If a man's duty is to adopt the course of conduct which produces the greatest amount of good on the whole, how is it possible to set limits to the self-denial, the asceticism, which such a principle of conduct seems to demand? How is it possible, except by a cynical or pessimistic disbelief in the usefulness of all social or philanthropic effort, to justify the

[1] *Types*, II, p. 255.

[2] This is not a suitable word to denote the impulse to promote all kinds of social good, but Martineau's list of motives supplies no other.

adoption of a less useful in preference to an intrinsically more useful or laborious profession—the expenditure of time upon abstract thought or study which might be spent in teaching the ignorant and brightening the lives of the wretched, the expenditure of money upon the conventional comforts of a middle-class home (to say nothing of the luxuries of 'the rich') when it might be spent upon hospitals and young men's clubs?

I do not pretend to offer a complete solution of this most difficult problem of practical Morality. I only wish to point out that, on the theory which makes universal Well-being the supreme end, it is not incapable of a solution which may commend itself to 'common sense' without in any way repressing the highest moral aspirations. I propose to notice a few of the more prominent of the considerations which must be taken into account in a solution of this question, whether in its application to the choice of a career or the choice of a mode of life in so far as such a choice remains open to those who have already adopted some recognized profession. However obvious they may seem (as most of them certainly are), an attempt to enumerate them will be the best way of illustrating the practical adaptability to such cases of our method of ideal Utilitarianism.

(1) In the first place, there are those considerations of what I have called 'moral prudence,' on which Dr. Martineau has—as I venture to think quite inconsistently with his main principle—sufficiently insisted. Before embarking under the influence of some higher motive upon a course of action not required by strict duty, which will require for its maintenance the continued presence of such higher motives, a man should have a reasonable prospect that the necessary inspiration will hereafter be forthcoming; otherwise the adoption of the higher course of life will lead to a moral fall rather than to a moral advance. In such cases the surrender to the 'higher motive' will not be conducive to the man's own moral Well-being on the whole, and therefore not conducive to the good of Society. Of course this principle will not hold where for some reason or other the course of action to which man is called is one of plain duty. But if the true canon of duty be, 'Act always on the highest motive,' it is difficult to see how any aspiration after some more heroic or

more saintly walk could ever be rightly repressed from a fear of its possible moral consequences. In that case the answer to such fears would be, 'Better do right now, even if you will not be able to live up to the level of your present enthusiasm hereafter.' If, on the other hand, it be the duty of the individual to realize the highest attainable moral and other good for himself and others, he will recognize that, though the career of a philanthropist may be higher than that (say) of an honest lawyer, he will himself attain a higher moral level as a lawyer than by the more imperfect fulfilment of a higher ideal.

(2) These considerations naturally lead us to the observation that certain social functions require for their adequate fulfilment that they should be done in a certain spirit. Such functions demand the possession of certain qualities of mind or heart or character which cannot be summoned up at the command of the will, and cannot be satisfactorily performed merely as a matter of duty. Common sense agrees with Roman Catholic Moral Theology in recognizing that it would be positively wrong for any one to enter upon certain careers which make great demands upon the moral nature, merely from a strong sense of duty, when they have no 'internal vocation' for them. The principle, no doubt, requires to be extended to many careers beyond those afforded by the priesthood and the religious orders, or the modern equivalents of such orders; and the true ultimate ground of such a distinction must, from our point of view, be found in the social advantages (moral and hedonistic) which flow from its observance, and the social disadvantages which would be entailed by its neglect. The average sister of mercy is, no doubt, a more valuable member of Society than a Belgravian lady who is somewhat above the average; but a sister of mercy with no natural love or instinct for her work, with no natural love for the poor or the sick or the young to whom she ministered, would be far less useful to Society than the Belgravian lady who performs respectably the recognized duties of her station, even though she may devote what must in the abstract be considered a somewhat excessive amount of time to domestic trivialities and social dissipation.

(3) While the principle just laid down applies pre-eminently

to certain special callings—such as those of the artist, the scholar, the man of letters, the clergyman, the teacher—it applies in a certain measure to all work which is capable of being liked at all, or for which any special aptitude is possible. It is for the general good that every man should do the work for which he is most fitted; and, as a general rule, a natural liking for the work or kind of life adopted is one of the most important qualifications for it. There are, of course, obvious limitations to the principle thus laid down. The highest tasks are necessarily repulsive to the lower part of a man's nature. A due distinction must be drawn between the kind of dislike which there is a reasonable prospect of overcoming and the dislike which is insurmountable; and, again, between the dislike which interferes with the due performance of the work and the dislike which does not interfere with it. A surgeon who could not overcome a physical squeamishness at the sight of blood would be more useful to Society as a billiard-marker. On the other hand, absolute callousness to human suffering, though it might increase his love of his profession, would scarcely, I presume, be a qualification for its duties.

(4) Regard must be paid not only to the effects of the individual's conduct, but to the effect of the general adoption of a like course of conduct on the part of others. Thus it would not be socially desirable to encourage all high-minded men to forsake the careers which seem from some points of view to stand upon the lowest moral level. A life of money-making (abstracted from the use which is to be made of the money when accumulated) may from some points of view seem one to which nobody could lawfully devote himself who had ever felt an aspiration after some higher kind of work; for, however necessary to society may be the work of merchants and stock-brokers, there would always (under existing conditions) be forthcoming a sufficient supply of duly qualified persons who would be attracted into these professions from purely mercenary motives. Against this, however, must be set the demoralization which would result to such classes or professions, and the consequent injury to Society, if all men of high character were led to avoid them. It may be questioned whether, upon this principle,

it may not sometimes be a positive duty on the part of some good people to continue in, if not to adopt, professions which may be in various degrees unfavourable to the improvement of their own personal character, or which at least involve much that is disagreeable to what we may call their moral taste, provided that they minister to legitimate social needs. The most extreme ill effects of the adoption of a contrary principle were experienced in the Middle Ages. The 'religious' life being assumed to be the highest of all careers, every man or woman anxious about his or her soul was driven into a religious house, unless, indeed, they were wealthy enough to found one. The consequence was an appalling relaxation of the standard of ordinary 'secular' morality—a complete de-spiritualization of all 'secular' life, including that of the secular priest. Even the work of the pastor had to be abandoned to worldly men, because it was not disagreeable enough to satisfy the religious man's hankering after self-mortification.

(5) Similar considerations are applicable to the innumerable difficulties which beset the Conscience of every man possessed with something of the 'enthusiasm of humanity' in the matter of personal expenditure, conventional luxury, and so on. In the first place, he will apply the principle of 'moral prudence' to the effects of his conduct upon himself and his capacity for work. He will make recreation subordinate to work, social pleasures to social usefulness, and so on. There is, however, room for as many different vocations, so to speak, in respect of the use that may be made of leisure hours as there is in the choice of a life-work: and some of them are higher than others. It is no doubt a morally higher thing to spend one's evenings in teaching a night school than to spend them in amusement or light reading. But if a man to whom some higher motive suggests the idea of taking up with the former occupation feels that the work would be excessively distasteful, and that as a consequence he would be less capable of efficiently discharging his duties in the day, and probably become irritable, discontented, and dyspeptic, he will do much better to play whist of an evening instead, even in the interests of his own moral Well-being. Still more evidently will such a course be recommended when we

extend our view first to the direct effects of the two alternatives on the happiness of others, and then to the effects which would follow an extensive imitation of a conscientious but uncheerful philanthropy. On Dr. Martineau's principle, it is difficult to see how it is possible to justify a rich man under any circumstances living the life of a country gentleman, even as such a life might be lived under the inspiration of a 'social Conscience' far above the average, when once it has been suggested to him that he might spend his fortune on some great work of social usefulness. He would certainly be prompted to the last course by 'compassion' and deterred from it (among however many other and better motives) by 'love of ease and sensual pleasure.' On the other hand, when once the appeal is made to social Well-being, a number of other important considerations suggest themselves which may well justify a man who does not feel strongly moved to make such a sacrifice in accepting the more agreeable alternative. He will reflect that the habits of a class cannot be suddenly changed, but that they may be gradually modified. He will remember that certain kinds of work can only be done in connexion with certain social positions: a hard-working professional man may do much more work than a resident squire, but he cannot do precisely the same work that a good squire may do. He might therefore do more good by setting an example of liberality, care for dependents, devotion to public duties, and moderation in amusement and personal expenditure, than by letting his country house and giving the proceeds to public works or well-administered charities. He will reflect that some forms of luxury have good social effects,—such as the encouragement of art and superior workmanship,—which ultimately benefit the community at large. He may feel that it is better to indulge to some extent in forms of luxury demanded by the customs of his class, but difficult to reconcile with abstract ideas of Justice, such as good dinners, expensive wines, a large house and numerous servants, rather than abandon great opportunities of social or political influence and usefulness.

It is not my intention here to discuss from a practical point of view the extent to which this principle should be carried. It

is probable that, while the existence of different standards of class expenditure and of considerable inequalities in the expenditure of individuals is socially beneficial, a vast amount of the conventional expenditure of the rich and well-to-do classes, in view of the surrounding sordid misery, is wholly unjustifiable; and that a still larger amount is only provisionally and relatively justifiable, because under existing conditions the non-conformity with established usage would on the whole, for such and such persons and in such and such circumstances, be the greater of two evils. But it is clear that very different standards of expenditure must be admitted, unless we are to pronounce many occupations or professions absolutely barred to persons whose social Conscience has once been aroused. If a man cannot justify to his Conscience the provision of champagne for his guests, it is clear that diplomacy is an impossible profession for him. If he cannot make up his mind to mess and contribute to regimental amusements as other officers do, he cannot enter the army; and in many other positions in life it is impossible to escape the choice between total isolation—with much loss not only of pleasure but of influence and professional effectiveness—and acquiescence in some kinds of expenditure which we may feel to involve a very unjust and socially inexpedient distribution of external goods. No doubt these 'necessities of one's position' should be duly weighed before the position which necessitates them is accepted. In many cases they might constitute a good reason for refusing to accept that position, and, when it is accepted, the duty remains of reducing them within reasonable limits; but I do not believe that it would be for the general good, and therefore I do not believe that the moral consciousness allows us to lay it down, that all positions involving a high standard of personal expenditure should be closed to any one whose eyes had once been opened to the responsibilities of wealth.

I need hardly add that the other side of the matter—the enormous need for men who will adopt exceptional modes of life, and devote themselves to public or philanthropic work in ways which do demand exceptional self-sacrifice—is an equally important one, and that for men who feel that need strongly

and their capacity for meeting it, the exceptional sacrifice may become the most imperative of duties. On this side of the matter I shall have more to say hereafter.

(6) Another consideration which must be borne in mind is that, if Well-being or Good in general be the supreme end, my good is a part of that end: and my happiness is a part of my good, though not the whole of it. It ought not, therefore, to be sacrificed to promote a less amount of it in others. And up to a certain point the general Well-being is best promoted by the principle that within the limitations demanded by strict duty every one shall exercise a reasonable care for his own happiness, and shall not make such complete sacrifices of material goods or advantages as will (he being what he is) involve the destruction of his tranquillity and contentment, although such sacrifices might be compatible with happiness in better men. This principle may be admitted even for the guidance of the individual Conscience—and still more when there is a question of inculcating such sacrifices on people in general—without going the length of saying, with the late Mr. Justice Stephen, that 'human nature is so constituted that nearly all our conduct, immensely the greater part of it, is and ought to be regulated much more by a regard to ourselves and to our own interests than by a regard to other people and their interests [1].' It is obvious that the extent to which this principle can be admitted will be very considerably narrowed by the acceptance of a non-hedonistic interpretation of Good. As soon as Morality is recognized as an end in itself and an essential part of true Well-being, it becomes impossible to admit that a pursuit of his own happiness, unmixed with and unregulated by a desire for other people's, could ever be the vocation of any man, even if in his particular case such a course of conduct should chance to be coincident with that dictated by the public Well-being. The individual should pursue his own Well-being as part of the general Well-being, but he will recognize that his moral Well-being demands a measure of self-sacrifice.

(7) The principle that the rationality of self-sacrifice logically implies a limitation to self-sacrifice, may be used to justify not

[1] In the *Nineteenth Century*, No. 118. p. 783.

merely some enjoyment on the part of every individual, but even a very unequal enjoyment on the part of some individuals. In proportion as we hold that competition, the struggle to raise the personal or family standard of comfort, the indulgence and development of individual tastes and inclinations in ways which involve considerable expenditure of wealth, the increase of differentiation in modes of life, and the like are good for Society, the individual must in some cases be justified in allowing himself an amount of luxury and enjoyment which would not be possible for all under the most ideal socialistic régime. It is possible to admit that civilization and progress demand considerable inequalities without accepting von Hartmann's doctrine that to promote maximum inequality is necessarily and under all circumstances to promote true social progress. The principle must be balanced by the complementary principle that such inequalities of enjoyment have a tendency to increase beyond the point which is socially expedient. To what extent this principle will justify the individual in choosing the easier and more enjoyable careers, and enjoying an exceptionally favourable social position or exceptional good fortune, will depend partly upon the answer he gives to a number of social and economic questions, and partly upon his personal circumstances and disposition. It is unnecessary to repeat once more that this consideration cannot possibly justify any individual under any circumstances in being merely an enjoyer of other men's labours. It may be good for Society that the wages of different classes and individuals should vary, even to a very large extent: it cannot possibly be to the advantage of Society or to the moral advantage of any individual that his wages should be wholly unearned.

(8) And, lastly, there is the fact that some kinds of work which do not call into activity the very highest 'springs of action' are as useful as, perhaps more useful than, those that do: and that in reference to some of these kinds of work it is even truer than of more distinctly spiritual kinds of work that 'the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few.' In England at least this is notably the case with all the higher kinds of intellectual labour. I for one cannot assent to that beatification of intellectual pursuits—and even of the most

selfish forms of intellectual sybaritism—which is not unknown among persons of literary and speculative tastes, but a demonstration of the supreme social value of such work—when it really is *work*—will be superfluous in the eyes of any one who is at all likely to read this book. All history is against the attempt to encourage intellectual Obscurantism in the interests of a narrow moral or material Utilitarianism. All history testifies to the intimate connexion, in the long run and within certain limits, between moral and intellectual vitality. The darkness of the dark ages was not merely intellectual darkness; the stagnation of China is not merely intellectual stagnation. And if an appeal may plausibly be made to a few brilliant periods, such as the Renaissance, as an exhibition of the possibility of high intellectual development in combination with a low *morale*, it must be remembered that the early phases of the Renaissance were periods of high moral as well as intellectual enthusiasm, and that the intellectual decay which set in so soon in those countries where the Renaissance was not also a period of moral and religious progress may be distinctly traced to the moral corruption. High excellence in Art involves such a long period of technical training that the greatest technical perfection of an Art movement often comes long after the decline of the moral and intellectual forces which produced it.

It is obvious that these reflections might be spun out indefinitely. Enough, it is hoped, has been said to illustrate the kind of guidance which may be afforded in the solution of such problems of vocation by the adoption of a consequential but non-hedonistic criterion of Morality.

IV

It will by this time have become evident that the course of our argument has led us from the discussion of a particular duty, that of choosing an occupation, into the discussion of a much larger and more fundamental question of ethics—the distinction between Duty and the morally good, between what are sometimes called duties of 'perfect' and those of 'imperfect obligation,' the question whether there are or are not such things as 'works of supererogation.' I have already contended that there are

cases where it is good for a man to contribute in certain ways to the general good, though it would not be wrong for him to refuse to contribute to it in those ways—that there are cases where a man may rightfully decline to perform socially beneficial actions for the reason (among others) that he does not feel a natural inclination or strong desire to perform them. On the other hand, it has been assumed (as it must be assumed by every system which recognizes moral obligation at all) that in some cases no amount of disinclination, no consideration of the sacrifice involved, will justify a refusal to adopt the course of action which will make the largest contribution to social good. But how, it may be asked, can such a distinction be admitted without involving ourselves in the *prima facie* immoral corollary that a man can do more than his duty? I believe that we have already by implication arrived at something like an answer to the question. One course, and one only, can ever be a man's duty; but duty itself requires *in certain cases* that regard shall be paid to the inner dispositions and inclinations of the individual. It is always a man's duty to do what conduces most to the general good; but the general good itself demands that, whereas some contributions to social good shall be required of all men placed under the same external circumstances, in other cases contributions differing both in kind and in amount shall be demanded of different men. It will be well, however, to dwell a little more at length upon the difficulty and importance of the problem under discussion.

The case for and against works of supererogation shall be stated by two modern French philosophers of the last generation, Émile Beaussire and Paul Janet. The contrast between their views on this point is the more striking on account of their general agreement in philosophic tendency. In the former writer's works we find such utterances as these:—

'Merit and virtue arise from accomplished duty, but in their highest degrees they tend to pass the limits of duty: they rise to the point of devotion. . . . To surrender one's children to the service of one's country, when she claims them in the name of the law, is a duty of obligation (*devoir de droit*). To offer them for it, when the law allows one to keep them, is a duty of virtue, or

rather an act of devotion which goes beyond duty. To withdraw them from the legal obligation of a public education where one sees a danger for their faith or for their morality, is perhaps the most imperious of duties [1].'

On the other hand, Janet, a typical representative of the 'spiritualistic' Philosophy once dominant in France, writes as follows:—

'The distinction of two domains, the domain of good and that of duty, would conduct us to the inadmissible supposition, that between two actions, of which one would be manifestly better than the other, the individual is at liberty to choose the less good. From what source could this privilege be derived? Is it not under another form that opinion of the Casuists so severely condemned by Pascal and by Bossuet, the opinion, that is to say, that between two probable opinions one is allowed to choose the less probable? [2]'

The writer then proceeds to explain the apparent collision between the verdict of reflection and the verdict of what Sidgwick would call 'common sense' on this head by the following considerations:—

(*a*) The degree of self-sacrifice demanded for the performance of a man's duty depends upon his circumstances, especially upon his 'rôle' in society. When it is demanded either by that 'rôle' or by the exceptional circumstances under which any man may find himself placed, 'devotion' becomes in the strictest sense a duty. This is the principle on which I have myself insisted. What I desiderate in Janet's admirable treatment of this subject is some discussion of the principles by which a man is to determine his 'rôle' in society. A theory of duty requires a theory of Vocation as its necessary complement.

(*b*) The highest degrees of moral perfection are not attainable by all men. It is a duty to strive after the highest degree of moral perfection that circumstances permit. 'No one is bound to do what is impossible: all are bound to do what is possible.'

(*c*) The popular distinction between duties and acts which it is good to do but not wrong to omit, depends mainly upon a particular characteristic of the subject-matter or content of certain duties, i. e. their indeterminateness.

[1] *Les Principes de la Morale*, pp. 169, 241. [2] *La Morale*, p. 227.

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(*d*) The development of the moral consciousness in different men being unequal, the same actions do not always suggest themselves to all men; acts of extraordinary heroism, ideals of extraordinary self-devotion, present themselves only to rare and exceptionally endowed natures.

'Further, in so far as the idea of an action has not presented itself to our minds, it is evident that it cannot be obligatory on us; that ceases to be the case as soon as this idea has been conceived by our consciousness. The action, once represented in thought, presents itself to us with all the characteristics of duty; and we cannot refuse it without remorse [1].'

Thus the popular distinction between duties and acts which it is good to do is to a certain extent justified, while the immoral deduction that it is possible to do more than one's duty, and sometimes right to do less, is avoided. With this position I should in the main agree. At the same time, I do not think that Janet has quite got to the bottom of the difficulty. He is no doubt right in holding that it is a duty to aim at doing the utmost amount of good that lies in one's power: and therefore it is not possible for a man to do more than his duty. Moreover, it is an essential characteristic of the moral law that it should be (in the Kantian phrase) 'fit to serve for law universal,' i. e. that what is right for one must be right for every one else in the same circumstances—when they are really the same. But it is perfectly consistent with this principle to include a man's character, moral, emotional, and intellectual, among the 'circumstances' or conditions upon which his duty in the particular case depends. The neglect of this distinction between external and what I may venture to call 'internal' circumstances or conditions, has been the main source of the vagueness and uncertainty which has generally characterized the treatment of the distinction between duties, and actions that it is good to do but not wrong to omit. By Janet the principle of internal or subjective conditions is to a certain extent recognized; but the interpretation which (here approximating to the position of Martineau) he would give to the principle seems to me at once too wide and too narrow. The only subjective circumstance, according to

[1] *La Morale*, p. 232.

Janet, which could ever justify a man in omitting a good action which it would have been good for another to perform seems to be the circumstance that the good action did not happen to occur to him. Similarly, according to Martineau, an act done from the highest motive actually present to the agent is always right; an act is never wrong unless a higher motive than that which prompted his actual choice was present to the agent's consciousness. Now, it seems to me that the practical maxims of such a system would under certain circumstances fall very much below, at other times rise too far above, what would generally be recognized as the requirements of duty properly understood. A crowd stands by while a child is drowned in three feet of artificial water in a London park. Would it altogether remove the moral disapprobation with which we regard the act of one of the individuals concerned if he pleaded that it never occurred to him to jump in and save the child? It seems to me that it is quite conceivable that to many persons in that crowd the thought did not occur. But it surely shocks all common sense to say that in that case they did not fail in their duty. There are surely many cases in which a man is ignorant of his duty, but in which we cannot deny that such and such a course was his duty, whether he knew it or not. From Martineau's point of view, indeed, such a statement would be an absurdity: since his criterion of duty is wholly subjective, it is impossible for a man to be ignorant of his duty. There is, according to his view, no objective right or wrong in actions; only a higher and a lower. But Janet insists strongly on the necessity of an objective criterion of Morality. It would seem, therefore, that we must exclude from the internal conditions that may vary the duty of two men placed in similar external circumstances the want of knowledge of what the duty is as well as the want of will to perform it, however much ignorance may in some cases mitigate the culpability. In asking under what subjective conditions *A* may be right in omitting an act which it would have been right for *B* in like external circumstances to perform, we must exclude the absence of sufficient devotion to duty on the part of *A*, or sufficient care to find out what his duty is: when we ask what is *A*'s duty, we assume

that he is anxious to find out his duty and willing to do it when found. But we may include in the internal conditions that vary duty the presence or absence of all moral qualities which are not under the immediate control of the will—which may be more or less cultivated, but which are not producible to order. Now, there are some good actions which do and there are others which do not require for their fulfilment moral qualities of this kind. A man's duty under all circumstances is to do what is most conducive to the general good: but, while the general good demands that certain good things shall be done by all men irrespective of their natural disposition and the degree of moral perfection which they have attained, there are other good things which the general good only demands that persons of a certain disposition and moral character should perform. Thus the social value of truth-speaking is not dependent upon the strength of the agent's natural love of truth, or the degree of moral advancement which he has attained in other respects. However reluctantly he speak the truth, Society gets the same advantage; if he lies, the injury to Society is the same. The public Well-being demands that *all* shall speak the truth. A man cannot therefore plead that he has no vocation for contributing to social good in that particular way: the general good demands that to this rule of conduct there shall be no exceptions[1]. Indeed, the more exceptional be the lie, the more harm it is likely to do. On the other hand it is good for a rich man (with no obvious private claims upon his purse) to sell all that he has, and to give the whole of his time and money (in ways consistent with sound economical principles) to the service of the poor. But this only becomes a *duty* in persons endowed with a sufficient love of the poor to do this not grudgingly or of necessity, and placed in certain perhaps rather exceptional external circumstances. In that sense it might even be called a work of supererogation, though the term is on the whole an objectionable one: not only is it not an action demanded by social Well-being of all men placed in similar circumstances, but this is one of those cases in

[1] I mean of course exceptions in favour of particular persons; I recognize the existence of exceptional cases when it is the duty of all not to speak the truth.

which (as Janet says of the voluntary adoption of celibacy from the highest motives) 'it is even evident that this state cannot be chosen by some, except on condition of its not being chosen by all[1].' The good of Society demands that there should be different vocations, some of them morally higher than others. A man can never do more than his duty, or without sin do less when once he knows what his duty is. But it is sometimes right, because desirable in the highest interests of Society, that a man should choose what must still be recognized as being from many points of view the lower vocation. It is morally as well as socially desirable that there should be a great liberty of choice as to the particular way and as to the extent to which he will contribute to social good; but that liberty of choice is conditioned by the duty—and that the most imperative of all duties—of adopting the vocation to which upon a fair review of all circumstances, internal and external, a man believes himself to be called. It is conditioned also, I may add—and this is a consideration which would demand much fuller treatment were I writing primarily with a practical object—by the duty of moral progress; that is to say, of gradually fitting himself (so far as the external conditions of his life allow) for a higher degree of devotion to social good than any to which, being what he is, he could at present wisely aspire.

The general tendency of non-utilitarian Philosophy has been either to assume that there is in all cases some one course of action which all moral men placed under the same external circumstances would recognize as their 'bounden duty,' or to find in the mere definiteness or indefiniteness of the received rules of conduct a sharp and fundamental distinction between 'duties' and acts which it is good to perform if one likes—between the terms 'right' and 'good' in their application to actions. On the other hand, it has been the tendency of Utilitarian Philosophy to reduce all duties to a general obligation to or encouragement of a philanthropy the extent and limitations of which are usually left undefined. By means of the principle of Vocation it is possible to justify the popular distinction between duties and charitable actions, without detracting either from the imperative-

[1] *La Morale*, p. 229.

ness of duty or from the claims of a more abounding charity, and to find the basis of that distinction in the requirements of social Well-being itself.

The positions at which I have arrived in the foregoing pages may be summarized by the following definitions:—

(1) It is always a man's *duty* to adopt the course of action most conducive to the general Well-being. A man can never do more than his duty, nor can he ever (when he knows his duty) without sin do less.

(2) The name of *absolute duties* may be given to those rules of conduct which the general Well-being requires to be observed by all men under given external circumstances, irrespectively of the subjective condition or character of the agent.

(3) Acts or omissions which the general good only requires under certain *internal* circumstances or subjective conditions may be termed *duties of Vocation.*

The question has been one of the traditional subjects of debate between Protestant and Roman Catholic Theologians. Catholicism has formally asserted, Protestantism has formally denied, the possibility of 'works of Supererogation.' If we look to the practical effects of the two one-sided doctrines, it would seem that Protestantism has in its periods of austerity and enthusiasm imposed upon all men a standard too rigid, too restrictive of natural and innocent pleasure, to be attainable or morally wholesome for the majority of men; while in its periods of dullness and spiritual lethargy it has reduced its moral ideal for all men to one of mere respectability, and tended to discourage acts or careers of exceptional self-denial and devotion. Catholicism, on the other hand, has at no period of its history failed to give all due encouragement to exceptional missions and high religious or social enthusiasms[1]; while it has at times relaxed the minimum standard of Morality required as 'necessary to salvation' to a dangerous and deplorable degree. A true and

[1] It has of course too often sought to bring the ideals and the practice of exceptional men into conformity with a single too narrow ecclesiastical type. The result has been either rebellion and schism, or (as with St. Francis) that the enthusiast's work was largely spoiled by the transformation which ecclesiastical authority imposed upon it.

healthy view of the matter will combine the two one-sided doctrines. With the Protestant it will insist on the necessity of a high standard of social duty for all; with the Catholic it will encourage and find room for any amount of self-devotion—of self-devotion of a kind which really conduces to social Well-being—in those who find within themselves the capacity and the call for such sacrifices.

V

The theory that there exists a certain sphere for the indulgence of the individual's spontaneous impulses and aspirations seems to me the germ of truth involved in the principle which in the hands of Prof. Höffding has been developed into a system which may be called one of 'Optional Morality[1].' He has rightly insisted on the fact that duties in detail may be different for different persons, and that the difference depends upon natural character and not merely upon external position, but he leaves out what appear to me to be the necessary qualifications of the doctrine. Upon his view, it would appear that the requirements of sexual Morality will be just what any one likes to make them. Prof. Taylor has also rightly insisted upon the idea of Vocation, but he seems to me to go much too far when he says that such a problem as that of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, called upon to choose between her chastity and her brother's life, is 'altogether a problem for the agent herself to decide, and to decide by reference to her own personal feelings[2].' It may be quite true that 'what might in one woman be an act of heroic self-sacrifice might in another be a cowardly desertion of duty';

[1] See his interesting and instructive article ('The Law of Relativity in Ethics') in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I (Oct., 1890).

Prof. Simmel has also insisted much on the fact that the 'ought' (*sollen*) for one individual is quite different from what it is for another, a principle which he pushes almost to the point of allowing the superior individual to disregard the conditions of social Well-being, but at the same time he very strongly insists that there can be only one duty for a given individual at a given time and in given circumstances (*Einleitung*, II, p. 39, &c.). All the writers mentioned (Höffding, Simmel, Taylor) seem to me to ignore the limitations which must be put to the application of a principle very sound in itself.

[2] *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 43.

but that would be in all probability because of the partial knowledge which each would possess of the circumstances and consequences of her act, and of like acts, upon general Well-being; or because, though the ideal of each might have much in it that is valuable, one or both of them may have been more or less imperfect and one-sided. The case seems to be by no means a good example of a matter in which duty is really dependent upon subjective inclination. I see no reason to doubt that the ideal woman ideally informed of the situation would know what to do under the circumstances; though, when considerations are so evenly balanced, the external critic would do well to respect, or at least to shrink from severely condemning, either choice conscientiously made. But, though the instance seems to be an unfortunate one, there can be no doubt that there are other cases where the duty really is different for different people. The best that is in one man is different from the best that is in another, and in order that the best in each should be developed, it is desirable not only that there should be limits to the extent to which uniform rules of conduct should be externally imposed by law or social pressure, but that, even from the point of view of the highest Morality, it should be recognized that the duty of the individual depends within certain limits upon his individual tastes, inclinations, aspirations. The same considerations of social Well-being which prescribe this liberty will prescribe also its limits.

We have so far discussed the subject without reference to those religious considerations which actually underlie the use of the word Vocation to indicate those particular spheres of social activity which are different for different individuals. A fuller discussion of the relations between Religion and Morality must for the present be postponed. Here it may be enough to remark that the religious or teleological view of the world, insisting on the idea that every human being is intended to realize some end, and an end in some measure perhaps different from that of every other individual, encourages the view that the individual is within certain limits allowed a choice between different kinds and different degrees of self-sacrifice; but it will emphasize also the fact that there is some one course of action,

if only he can find it out, which is the individual's duty; and it will encourage also the disposition to assume that a strong prompting towards or aspiration after a particular kind of social service constitutes a presumption that that particular kind of social service is one to which the individual is really called by God.

VI

This chapter may conclude with a brief reference to a rather curious thesis of Professor Simmel[1]—the doctrine that a man ought to choose his social function in such a way as to utilize his moral deficiencies in the public interest. I should quite admit the principle as far as it goes. A man with a love of arbitrary power might be well advised in making himself an Indian civilian or a schoolmaster; a man in whom the passion of curiosity is strongly developed, a detective; a man with a great distaste for regular work might justify his existence as an explorer; and so on. On the other hand, a man exceptionally sensitive to other people's sufferings would be disqualified for the profession of a soldier or criminal judge, while he might make a good clergyman. What I should not admit is that the deficiencies would actually make him better in the work of his profession, if they are really moral deficiencies and not merely intellectual or emotional capacities which have a value in some men but which it might not be desirable for every one to possess in the same degree. The soldier will not be the worse soldier for being tender-hearted if he has also a strong sense of duty and a strong will, though a hard-hearted soldier will not be so useless or pernicious as a hard-hearted doctor or clergyman. The clergyman will be less valuable even as a clergyman if his philanthropy overpowers zeal for righteousness or his sense of Justice. What makes the man socially useful is not really the absence of certain good qualities but the presence of certain good qualities in spite of the absence of certain others. A merely one-sided emotional development may from a rough practical point of view seem a positive help to a man's usefulness

[1] 'Moral Deficiencies as determining Intellectual Functions,' in *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III, 1892-3, p. 490 sq.

in a particular position, because human nature is so constituted that extreme and yet valuable developments of this kind are frequently found in persons who lack the complementary qualities (which may be relatively unimportant for that particular place in life); but still the man would be nearer the ideal if he did combine both sides of character.

It might be possible, indeed, to contend that even the ideal man's character (and not merely his conduct) must be to some extent relative to his vocation. There is a sense, no doubt, in which this is true. We might perhaps adequately recognize this truth by saying that in the ideal man the qualities less required by his special vocation would be there potentially, if not to any great extent actually. The student cannot be so often under the influence of strong social or humanitarian emotion as the preacher of social reform or the worker in slums, but he *may* be (though unfortunately he *tends* not to be) equally capable of such emotions upon occasion, and just as ready to perform such social or humanitarian duties as are actually duties for him. And so he will not be the better student on account of any defect which can strictly be called a moral defect. A strictly moral defect would be, in fact, by definition, the absence of a quality which ought to be present in some measure in all men.

The question how far there is any single ideal of human character is one which deserves a little further consideration[1]. If by 'character' we mean actual, developed tendencies to feel and act in a certain way, it may be freely admitted not merely that there is an ideal character appropriate to each particular vocation or position in life, but that even within the ranks of the same occupation, or in matters which have no special relation to any particular mode of life, there is room for considerable variety of character. The perfection of human society demands the interaction of many different types of human excellence, moral as well as intellectual. Some kinds of conduct are good only in so far as they are exceptional, and would become socially pernicious if they were practised too frequently or too exclu-

[1] That there is such a single ideal has been denied by von Hartmann, *D. sittl. Bewusstsein*, p. 131.

sively; and there are, as we have seen, certain departments of conduct in which a certain type of conduct only becomes right, as it is practically only possible, for persons of a certain temperament. There are duties peculiar to particular vocations—that is to say, not merely duties connected with particular offices or professions or classes, but duties incumbent on individuals of a certain temperament or certain capacities without being incumbent on all—; and there are divergent types of intellectual and emotional constitution which qualify a man for one occupation or mode of life rather than for another, and make it his duty to adopt one rather than another. Within a certain range, Society wants for its perfection men of very divergent qualities and tendencies. Society requires born Radicals and born Conservatives. That everybody should exhibit the ideal mean between the two would not answer its purposes so well as a division of labour between men of different temperaments. The ideal 'moderate' in a state of society ripe for revolution would be too moderate for a revolutionary, and too progressive for a functionary. The moderate Liberal may have his place and his work, but he cannot perform the function either of the revolutionary or of the good Conservative who makes the best of a bad system, or tries to mend it by unheroic improvements. Both social functions are useful, but they cannot both be performed by the same person; the fact that a man performs one makes it impossible that he should perform the other. A man cannot be a religious or political reformer of the more thoroughgoing kind and at the same time a guide of timid consciences and a gradual improver of existing institutions. There is room for a Luther, and there is room for an Erasmus; but the same person cannot undertake both rôles. No doubt a man more reasonable than Luther and less timid than Erasmus might conceivably have taken either line, though it would have been, doubtless, the same with a difference; but sooner or later there must have come the alternative—to break with the Roman Church or not to break with it. Good might have been done by either course, but not the same good; and, though it is possible to think of an ideal man who might have done more good than either a Luther or an Erasmus, it is possible, also, that one task

was best done by a man of a vehement or violent temperament and the other by a man of somewhat timid character.

All this may be fully and freely admitted [1]; but there remains a sense in which we may nevertheless speak of a single ideal of human character, and cannot refuse to do so without contradicting the most essential deliverances of the moral consciousness. In no individual whatever, no matter how circumstanced, can there be too great a devotion to duty or to the good, though that devotion will show itself in different ways, varying not merely with outward circumstances but with intellectual and emotional constitution. Moreover, among the emotions, desires, or tendencies to action which inspire men to promote the good, or which are recognized by the moral consciousness as having an intrinsic value of their own, there are some which, we feel, ought to exist in all men, and without which no man can attain the ideal in any position of life, though within certain limits the relative prominence or strength of them may sometimes vary without making one a better man than the other. But there are other desires, emotions, and inclinations which may be pronounced good, though in this or that individual they may be almost entirely absent or undeveloped without his being on that account placed on a lower level than those who have them. Under this head will fall not merely purely intellectual or aesthetic tendencies, but also many qualities which do in a sense belong to character, though they are practically inseparable from certain intellectual or aesthetic capacities. The capacity to produce or to 'understand' music is an intellectual gift which possesses value, but the love of music is in a sense a quality of character. Still, it is a quality of character which we do not recognize it as a duty for all individuals in all circumstances to possess or to acquire, since in some cases it either could not be acquired at all, or could only

[1] To a large extent of course the one-sided man is only made more effective by the moral and intellectual defects of other people; in a more perfect society there might be no need for such men. But I do not think we could suppose the need for such one-sidedness altogether eliminated in a society which should still be human. I am here speaking in a merely popular way, and do not profess to draw a sharp distinction between a difference of qualities or 'characteristics' and different degrees of development of one and the same characteristic.

be acquired at the cost of certain other qualities of equal or greater value both intrinsically and on account of their social effects. In such cases we do not regard the man who possesses these qualities as necessarily a better man than the man who lacks them.

With regard to those qualities which are more closely connected with the state of the will, and have a bearing upon the performance of duties which are duties for every man, we recognize a certain ideal scale of values. We pronounce that such and such qualities are morally higher and better than certain others; but inasmuch as these qualities are not always under the immediate control of the will, we do not say that a man has necessarily failed in his duty because in his character this ideal scale of relative prominence has not been reached. But still, I think, we should recognize that, so long as we confine ourselves to these more general and universal ingredients, so to speak, of human character, there is an ideal balance of these qualities which a man cannot fall short of without being a less ideal man than he who exhibits it, though in one position the higher qualities may be less frequently called into activity than in others. For the man of higher nature it might be wrong to accept positions in which these higher qualities would have small opportunities for their due development and influence upon Society. But the ideal man would not be actually disqualified by the possession of these qualities for any position in life whatever; though, no doubt, in point of fact their presence is often found to be accompanied by other qualities or defects of quality which might make him less efficient in some positions than a less good man. Not only could no man have too much devotion to the good in general, but such qualities as love, truthfulness, purity, courage, and the like are qualities which no man in any position could have too much of, or be deficient in without falling proportionately below the true human ideal. Without some measure of those qualities he could not have that devotion to duty without which he could not be a good man at all. And even with regard to their relative prominence there is to some extent an ideal, and a man cannot fall short of the ideal without being a man of lower character than the man who

approximates to it more nearly, though he may succeed in doing his duty just because for a man of lower type duty may be something different than for the man of higher type. Of these universal qualities there can be no excess. A man could not be too brave, so long as bravery means simply a willingness to face danger when duty calls. On the other hand, there is a kind of intrepidity, of positive delight in danger, which the ideal scholar might well be without, but which might be an excellent quality in a soldier. Nobody can be too charitable, i.e. too desirous to do good to his fellows; but the positive longing for disagreeable kinds of service exhibited by a man of the St. Francis type, though an excellent and beautiful thing, is not a necessary part of the ideal character. It is a quality which makes an excellent Friar, but would be a disqualification for the career of a statesman or a scholar. We should wish all men to have as much goodwill for their fellows as St. Francis of Assisi; we should not wish them all to have the same liking for disagreeable duties or the same dislike of learning. All good men must have some love of humanity, but a special liking for the young or for the old, a desire to save one's country collectively or to save individual souls, a special zeal for Temperance or for Justice or for the relief of suffering—these are qualities which may be present in a high or a low degree without the man being any better or worse than other men somewhat differently constituted. A certain respect for knowledge or beauty is a characteristic of the ideal good man, as also is a disposition to subordinate them to the more imperative claims of Justice and Humanity. In so far as men of the philanthropic type altogether lack such respect, it must be pronounced a moral defect, though not a breach of duty or a sin; in so far as its relative non-development is merely incidental to the strength of the humanitarian impulse and the demands of a particular occupation, the man with this defect is not morally worse than the man who is without it. Indifference to human suffering in an Artist is a defect of character; the ideal Artist would possess the potentiality of caring for human suffering, which on proper occasions would be called into activity. But an Artist might be habitually occupied with the pursuit of his Art, his mind might be habitually

occupied with dreams of beauty and his will absorbed in realizing them, while he was comparatively seldom occupied with reflecting on human suffering or with efforts to relieve it, without being in any wise a worse man, or even representing a lower type of humanity, than the ideal Philanthropist.

We may thus recognize three meanings in the term character when used in this connexion: (1) Character in the narrower sense means the degree of a man's devotion to the good in general. In this sense the ideal is the same for all. To be less devoted to the good must always mean to be a lower man, while to fall below that measure of devotion to good which is necessary to the performance of the man's particular vocation is to fail in duty. (2) By character may be meant the possession of those emotions, desires, tendencies to action, likings and dislikings which we always recognize as good (irrespectively of any particular occupation or course of life), a measure of which is demanded by the true moral ideal for all men, but which may be present in very different proportions without occasioning failure in duty, and sometimes even without placing the man on a higher or lower moral level. (3) Character may be held to include those qualities, desires, inclinations, likings and dislikings, or more specialized applications and developments of the more universal qualities, which, though they may be good in themselves, are incompatible with others equally good, and which, therefore, we do not recognize it as good for all men to possess in all circumstances. Here even the total absence of some qualities which we cannot deny to possess high value may be compatible with the highest moral excellence in the ordinary sense of the word: that is to say, we recognize that the defect has nothing to do with the will, though for particular persons it may, of course, be a duty to seek to overcome the defect.

That these three kinds of excellence run into one another, that a high development of each of them presupposes some development of the others, and so on, I not only do not want to deny but should strongly assert. Any more exact account of them would involve elaborate psychological analysis for which this is not the place. The sole purpose of this enumeration is to draw a distinction between a sense in which there is only one moral

ideal and a sense in which there are many, all of them excellent but to a greater or less degree incompatible with one another. That devotion to the good or to duty which is the crowning excellence of all is one and the same, however diverse are the particular forms in which it manifests itself; and some other qualities and characters are so closely connected with this devotion to the good in all its forms that no one could be altogether without them, or could depart from a certain ideal balance or proportion between them, without falling below the highest ideal of humanity, though it is possible to fall below the highest ideal of humanity without actual sin or failure in duty. As the qualities assume more and more specialized forms, have less and less connexion with that devotion to the good in general which is incumbent upon all, become more and more dependent upon intellectual and purely emotional (as distinct from moral) characteristics, have more and more special reference to particular circumstances of life and the specialized activities which correspond with them, absolute or relative failure in some of them becomes more and more compatible with high excellence of the man on the whole. In the human ideal there are universal elements and particular elements; the ideal man must be a good man in general, but on the other hand there is no such thing as goodness in general which does not express itself in one or more alternative types or specialized kinds of good activity. In each of these types some common characteristics can be discovered, but also some elements peculiar to itself. Nay more, since both the natural endowments and the external circumstances of each man are in some degree unlike those of any other man, there is even, we may say, an ideal for each particular individual.

To deny either of these sides of the truth leads to exaggeration and one-sidedness. To make the degree of a man's devotion to the good in general the only thing that is excellent in human character is to set up an empty abstraction—a universal with no particulars, to make into our ideal a universal man who is not and cannot be a real man at all, to forget that devotion to good in general can only be realized by devotion to some particular kind of good in detail. Or at best it is to substitute an abstract sense of duty for the human affections and emotions which are

really better motives of conduct than a sense of duty which is without love. On the other hand to deny absolutely that there is any such thing as a single ideal for Humanity is virtually to deny the objectivity of our moral judgements, or at the very least to deny the unique value of Morality in the stricter sense—the supreme value of the rightly directed will, and of those more universal qualities of character without which there cannot be a rightly directed will in any man or in any circumstances. Since Morality means contribution to the true good of Society, a defective devotion to that good, and the absence of qualities which impel to the promotion of it, could not be positively demanded in the interests of true Well-being, and therefore could not in any individual, however circumstanced, constitute no moral defect.

Plato seems to have hit the essential truth in this matter when he demanded Justice of all, and a certain measure of the other Virtues, while he insisted that the same measure or development of them was not demanded of all men. This principle of the specialization of character corresponding to a specialization of social function must be carried much further than he carried it—so far indeed that we may perhaps regard it as probable that for each man there is an ideal which is not exactly the same as any other man's ideal; and for Justice, as the one indispensable and dominant Virtue for all, we should perhaps substitute a love which may assume very varied forms, but which will always be a love of Humanity which is also love of all that is good as such.

CHAPTER V

MORAL AUTHORITY AND MORAL AUTONOMY.

We have hitherto conducted our enquiry as though each man actually arrived at his moral judgements by the independent workings of his own moral consciousness, thinking out each problem as it arises *de novo* in complete independence of his fellows and their moral judgements. Now it is obvious that this representation entirely fails to correspond with the facts. Every individual finds himself from the earliest dawn of moral consciousness a member of a society in which there are established rules of conduct, standards of praise and blame, social institutions, accepted models, recognized ideals. And the morality of the society has been most emphatically enforced upon the individual by all kinds of social pressure, ranging from actual or threatened punishment down to the most faintly indicated 'disapproval' or the mere withholding of positive commendation.

The beginning of the process by which the individual becomes indoctrinated with the ideals of his society is of course to be found in the earliest education of children. The Intuitionism which supposed that the young child finds written upon his consciousness a ready-made code of right and wrong,—the whole content of the Ten Commandments or of the Ethics of Aristotle or of the Sermon on the Mount,—is an Intuitionism which, in so far as it ever existed outside the imagination of utilitarian critics, is a thing of the past. Without entering upon the difficult question how far moral ideals or predispositions towards them are matters of actual inheritance, it may confidently be denied that a child deserted in the woods and suckled by wolves would have any moral ideas at all, or that an English child brought up by savages would, on attaining the age of twenty-one, find himself in possession of the same moral ideas as his father and mother. Nobody attains to his moral ideas without moral education, and this education is more or less continued through-

out life. The difference between an Englishman's moral ideas and a Chinaman's is enormous. There is a difference even between the moral ideas of European nations on much the same plane of civilization. There are very few Englishmen, even among the highly educated (on whom the pressure of the immediate environment is weakened by familiarity with a wider range of moral ideas through literature, itself of course a kind of social influence), who can suppose that their moral ideas on all points would be exactly what they are, had they lived entirely among Frenchmen from their earliest years. And with the great majority of men the influence of the immediate environment is paramount. Their dominant or operative ideal (though there may be some higher view of life which shares the secret homage of their hearts) is to a greater or less extent the morality of their school, their class, their social circle, their profession, their neighbourhood.

Now in the admission that people come by their moral ideals through education there is nothing whatever to encourage moral scepticism, to encourage the doubt whether Morality is after all anything more than what other people *de facto* think about our conduct, the doubt whether there is such a thing as an absolute Morality discernible by Reason. The discovery that men's moral ideas are in a sense the result of education is often in actual fact a very fruitful source of moral scepticism, both in theory and in practice, but some moral scepticism is a necessary condition of moral progress. It was the discovery of the fact that the morality of the Persians was not quite the same as that of the Greeks, nor the ideal of Sparta precisely that of Athens, which originated the crude scepticism of certain Sophists, and the theory that Justice was a matter of convention, not of Nature (*νόμῳ*, not *φύσει*), with which Plato does battle in the *Republic*. But after all the necessity of moral education supplies no more reason for thinking that Morality is purely arbitrary than the fact that Mathematics have to be taught is any reason for doubting the truth of that Science. I do not, of course, suggest that the influence of education upon moral ideas is precisely the same in kind or in degree as the influence of education upon the development of mathematical capacity. The Science of Mathe-

matics was, indeed, slowly developed, and that not by experience in the ordinary sense of the word, but by mere thinking out of the consequences of very simple, self-evident truths; but it has to be laboriously communicated to each individual who wishes to become a Mathematician. So far the parallel is complete. But, although people do not become Mathematicians without teaching, they do all ultimately come to have the same mathematical ideas if they have any mathematical ideas at all. Some men are incapable of coming to see mathematical truths, but they seldom attempt (though I should imagine that such cases might be found [1]) deliberately and consciously to deny what have become accepted truths of Mathematics. Yet, even in Mathematics, it is the consensus of practically all persons endowed with adequate mathematical capacity who have seriously applied their minds to the subject, that causes that Science to be accepted as the type of scientific certainty—an explanation which, however, is not complete without the addition that the tests of adequate capacity and adequate study are here simple and unmistakable. But the moment we leave pure Mathematics and the physical Sciences which have reached a mathematical form, this consensus of the competent begins to disappear. Even in the less advanced branches of physical Science, and in the higher reaches even of the most advanced, there is room for wide difference of opinion; and be it observed, this difference is partly due to purely intellectual causes, to the different degrees of intellectual insight, lucidity of mind, logical power, observation and judgement possessed by different men, but only partly. Even here—in a region comparatively remote from the great practical interests which inspire passion and distort judgement—every one knows to what an enormous extent men's opinions are liable to be swayed by such influences as personal loyalty, personal antagonism, fashion, party spirit, caprice, carelessness, laziness, ambition, conceit. Still more obviously do those influences—the

[1] As for instance when Hobbes, finding 'almost all geometers' against him in his controversy with Wallis, declared that 'either I alone am mad, or I alone am not mad; other alternative there is none, unless, perchance, some one may say that we are all mad together' (quoted by G. Croom Robertson in *Hobbes, Phil. Classics for Eng. Readers*, p. 183).

influence of the environment on the one hand and the 'personal equation' on the other—mould men's views upon such matters as speculative Philosophy, History, Social Science, Politics. And yet, in these departments of knowledge nobody seriously doubts that there is a truth to be found, and that it is discoverable by a proper use of the intellectual faculties which we possess, or supposes that there is any remedy for these defects of our thinking, any infallible criterion by which to distinguish truth from prejudice, except a further, more thorough, more conscientious use of the very faculties whose limitations we acknowledge.

In so far as the differences of ethical opinion turn upon the question of the right means to be adopted with a view to a given end, this difference is of exactly the same kind as differences of opinion on any matter of common life. The fact that people at one time did not see the wrongness of indiscriminate charity could hardly be supposed to weaken our confidence in the validity of moral judgements, any more than the Science of Heat is discredited by the fact that the steam engine is a modern invention. But when we turn to the question of ends, there are special reasons why in this matter, more than in many others, differences of opinion should be peculiarly frequent and why one man's opinion should be emphatically not as good as another's. Although the power of judging of moral value is, I believe, essentially an intellectual faculty, it is a highly special intellectual faculty. Sensitiveness to the moral ugliness of drunkenness or impurity or appreciation of the moral beauty of unselfishness are qualities which vary in different individuals to an enormous extent. And these differences of moral insight, like the differences of aesthetic appreciation, by no means correspond with differences of general intellectual capacity. Like the power of musical appreciation, they appear to be almost wanting in some individuals not destitute of high intellectual powers. Moreover, intellectual as it is, its actual exercise is, as I have endeavoured to show [1], largely conditioned by the emotional capacity and the emotional development of the individual. The judgement 'Suffering ought to be relieved' might indeed be made on purely intellectual grounds by one who had little or no sympathy with

[1] Cf. above, Bk. I, ch. vi, p. 154 sq.

suffering. But in practice the clearness with which this truth has been seen, and the intensity of conviction with which it has been accepted, depend at least as much upon the emotional as upon the intellectual endowments of the race or the generation or the individual. Moreover, to a great extent, our moral judgements are judgements upon the intrinsic value of certain kinds of feeling, and in these cases the judgement of value cannot be made unless the feeling is actually felt, except so far as a man may (on account of some inferred analogy with what he has felt) judge that a certain feeling in another deserves respect, even though he may not chance to experience it himself, or may condemn it on account of its incompatibility with a feeling which he has felt and values. Here again differences between the emotional capacity of different individuals affect the value of their ethical judgement. Not only do the individual's powers of correct ethical judgement vary, but, except in those in whom this power is strong and in the particular directions in which it is strong, these judgements of value (like aesthetic judgements) are peculiarly liable to be swayed by the judgements of others, and by the influence of those emotions and associations through which the judgements of others appeal to us. It should be observed that *some* moral or aesthetic capacity is actually presupposed in this sympathetic influence, and there are limits to the extent of such influence. A man who really does not know what Beauty is, will probably not be induced by the *ipse dixit* of the connoisseur to grow enthusiastic, unless it be as a piece of conscious hypocrisy, over the work of some fashionable school. It is the man of dim, confused, undeveloped aesthetic perceptions, who will grow into an admiration for what he is told to admire. He may be induced to admire what is less worthy of admiration, and to depreciate what is more worthy; but he could not be induced to admire that which possesses no merit or beauty whatever. He would be imposed upon by a fairly good copy of an Old Master, but not by an execrably bad one. It is just the same in the moral sphere: only here the modifying influence of environment is multiplied a thousand-fold by all the influences, the emotions (some of them of high moral worth), even the moral principles which link us to our fellow men.

There is another important difference between moral and other judgements. Not only is the power of judging rightly as to ultimate moral values dependent upon a faculty distinguishable from a man's general intellectual capacity, but it is to a large extent dependent upon the degree in which his will responds to those judgements. That moral discernment is the outcome of a habit of moral action was the theory of Aristotle. No doubt it is much more possible than Aristotle supposed to judge well, not merely about means but about moral ends or ideals, and to act badly; but it remains true that to a large extent the power of moral intuition may be improved or impaired by our voluntary conduct, and therefore the truth of men's moral judgements depends not merely upon insight, but upon character. Here we have an additional source of inequality in men's powers of discerning between right and wrong.

In view of all these facts, it must appear that the attempt on the part of the individual to think out his moral code *a priori*, in entire independence of his environment, is an impracticable one, and one which would be disastrous, if it were practicable [1]. That this is so with the great mass of men is sufficiently obvious. They have not the knowledge, the experience, the leisure to trace out all the advantages and disadvantages of conflicting courses of action, whether in detailed circumstances or with regard to general principles of conduct. They could not have become moral beings at all without moral education; and yet that moral education has been gradually unfitting them for the impartial exercise either of their ordinary understanding in dealing with means or of their moral Reason in choosing ends. They can only have learned to approve and disapprove by actually approving or disapproving particular things, and such approval or disapproval has been making it more and more difficult for them to approve

[1] Dr. McTaggart writes: 'Nothing can be more important to me, in respect of any branch of knowledge, than my own immediate certainties about it. Nothing can be less important than the immediate certainties of other people' (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 72). But surely even in other branches of knowledge than Ethics a man may have to rely on other people's immediate certainties – e.g. a dyer or a Physicist investigating the cause of colour might well consult an Artist who would see shades of difference in colour which he could not perceive himself.

or disapprove something markedly different. Other men's moral judgements, sympathetically appropriated by them, have given a bias to their emotions, and the emotions have reacted upon their judgement. It may be suggested that, on attaining years of discretion, the individual would do well to emancipate himself from the distorting influence of his social environment, and school himself into thinking entirely for himself on moral questions. And to some extent this is no doubt desirable; but, if it were done completely, the individual would be thereby withdrawing himself from the school in which alone Virtue is teachable. Once more the aesthetic analogy may help us. It is only by studying great Masters that a man can himself become an Artist; and that study implies that he is submitting himself to influences which are moulding his taste and judgement, which are every moment limiting in certain directions his power of impartially and independently judging between their ideals and other ideals. And yet without such education he would never acquire any power of independent judgement at all [1].

[1] Von Hartmann, with his accustomed ethical insight, recognizes that the ordinary Morality of the average man is not and cannot be 'reine Autonomie noch reine Heteronomie' but 'eine Konkurrenz beider,' and that in the average individual intrinsic moral activity must necessarily present itself in the form of an external rule which represents an autonomous Morality in the community to which he belongs: such Morality is 'nur für das Individuum als solches eine Heteronomie, aber für das ganze Volk als Individuum höherer Ordnung betrachtet ist sie Autonomie, nämlich ein Integral aus allen autonomsittlichen Individualwillensakten' (*Ethische Studien*, pp. 110, 114). At the same time he strongly insists upon Autonomy as the ideal. In much that is said in some quarters about Heteronomy and Autonomy there seems to be a certain confusion between two senses of the word. A man's *will* may be autonomous enough to satisfy Kant himself, although in some of the details of Morality he defers to the judgement of others. Nobody but a lunatic refuses to accept the judgement of others in matters of which he knows nothing: and nobody can have an independent judgement in every department of conduct. It is only when we come to the most general principles of Morality that lack of Autonomy necessarily implies a low level of personal Morality. A man is not the less moral because he allows Church or State to decide for him the morality of marrying his deceased wife's sister; though he would be an undeveloped moral being if his respect for unselfishness were wholly based upon authority. If this be denied, it can only be in the sense that absolutely ideal Morality would imply an ideally complete intellectual development.

Are we then to condemn the attempt to think for oneself in moral matters? Are we to say that a man must simply submit himself wholly and unreservedly to the maxims, the traditions, the ideals of the society in which he finds himself? A moment's reflection is enough to negative the suggestion. A principal object of moral education is to form the habit of judging for oneself. The ancient philosopher who most emphasized the necessity of moral education by habituation insisted no less strongly that the moral education was not complete until the man had come to see and appreciate for himself the reason, the ground, the principle of the maxims which he at first accepted on authority[1]. And if the man's moral education has been a success, if he really has been taught to use his moral Reason, it cannot invariably stop in its exercise at the exact point which would prevent the deliverances of his own moral consciousness coming into collision with those of his moral instructors. The majority of men, of course, are not likely to rise on the whole far above the moral ideal of their society; but, if we do not confound Morality with the mere observance of a few traditional, and for the most part negative, maxims of conduct, it is clear that very ordinary men must have some moral originality or individuality. A man who thought and felt with the majority on every detail of life and conduct would be, as nearly as it is possible to be, a man without a character. And it is precisely to the men in whom moral education has been most successful, who have absorbed most completely all that was best in the teaching and example by which they were educated, that there are most certain to come moments at which they are impelled to question the teaching they have received; and to apply the principles which they have imbibed to the criticism of those principles themselves, or to carry them out into applications not dreamed of by those from whom they learned them. Moral innovations of this sort may of course take a great variety of forms. Sometimes there will be a violent reaction against morals that have been taught; and yet the greatest of moral revolutionaries have owed not less to their environment than the most rigid traditionalists. The environment of Athens produced Socrates as much as it

[1] Aristotle, *Ethic. Nicomach.*, VI. 12 (p. 1144 *a*).

produced the Sophists. Ruskin appeared to his average contemporaries from one point of view as a dangerous reactionary, from another as a dangerous revolutionary. And yet Ruskin owed as much to early nineteenth-century Evangelical education as Macaulay. The most violent reaction often owes much to the ideas against which it reacts, and the reaction in turn often contains within itself the germs of the most startling revolutions. And in more ordinary cases moral improvement takes place through the expansion, the development, the intensification, the fresh application of principles already acknowledged, the clearer vision of truths of which there have been already at least many glimpses.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to analyse further the nature of these new stages in moral progress. Sometimes the innovation is a purely intellectual discovery, a recognition that such and such a principle must necessarily lead to such and such a consequence, or that such and such an end could be best attained by some hitherto undreamed-of means; sometimes it is an emendation of the fundamental axioms (so to speak) of moral thought, as when the civic morality of the Hellene or the tribal morality of the Jew is supplanted by a comprehensive principle of universal Benevolence; sometimes it is some signal increase of the emotional intensity with which a quite accepted principle is realized; sometimes it is the revision of the values recognized in ultimate ends or elements of Well-being, as when it is seen that a stricter restraint of appetite than pagan Ethics required is better worth having than its indulgence, or that Christian Humility (properly understood) is more beautiful than the self-assertion of Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος. To tie the individual down to absolute acquiescence in the judgements of his predecessors or his contemporaries would be to put a stop to the possibility of moral progress. To tell the man of the least gifted moral nature that he is never to think for himself about what he ought to do would be to doom him to moral stagnation or sterility. Mr. Bradley (who seems rarely to touch upon practical matters without violent and obvious exaggeration) has laid it down that for a man 'to wish to be better than the world is to be already on the threshold of

immorality[1].' It would be truer to say that the man who is content to be as moral as his neighbours has already passed considerably beyond that threshold. Would not any one who really supposed that at all times 'wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the Ethos of one's country' inevitably have voted for the condemnation of Socrates, and have joined the crowd which shouted 'Crucify him, crucify him'?

II

How, then, are we to adjust these two principles—the principle of moral authority and the principle of private judgement, both in their way essential to a sound Morality in society and in individuals? At the earlier stages of moral development the question can never arise; for to a large extent the influence of the Authority is unconscious: to question it already implies the first stage of emancipation. Authority achieves its most complete success when it is no more felt as Authority than we are directly aware of the pressure which the atmosphere is at every moment exercising upon our bodies. But if we suppose a child or a man who has arrived at the stage of intellectual and moral development at which he is capable of asking, 'How far should I obey Authority in Ethics?' we should have to say to him just what we should have to say to a man who asked, 'How far am I to rely upon Authority in matters of historical criticism or of aesthetic judgement?' In the latter case, for instance, we should tell him, 'You must begin by accepting provisionally the judgement of the best guide you can find. If you begin to paint Nature without the assistance of those who have studied Nature before you, it is unlikely that you will ever paint better than some crude predecessor of Cimabue. On the other hand, if you try to form your taste by studying all the pictures that you

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 180. Elsewhere Mr. Bradley quotes with approval Hegel's commendation of a purely particularistic morality (ib. p. 169): 'Hence the wisest men of antiquity have given judgement that wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the Ethos of one's people.' This nearly approaches the doctrine of Kirchmann ('Jedes Volk muss sein Sittliches für ein Unbedingtes und Unveränderliches halten'), against whom von Hartmann polemizes as the typical representative of the 'moral principle of Heteronomy' (*Das sittliche Bewusstsein*, p. 63).

come across without allowing your judgement to be warped by the suggestion that you will probably find the best pictures in the National Gallery, you would be in great danger of never finding your way to Trafalgar Square at all. And even at Trafalgar Square it is not every boy or man who would learn to think the Old Masters better than an average English Academician if he had never been told that they were generally so considered. But it is in vain to suppose that in following this course you will not have contracted a bias. The greatest of the great Masters show the influence of their teachers. But in course of time you will learn from your chosen guides themselves, in proportion as you have chosen them well and in proportion as you are capable of learning it, how gradually to correct that bias, and to judge for yourself what is beautiful. You will give up your reliance upon Authority just where and in so far as you see reason to suspect that your chosen guides were wrong, and that you are more likely to be right.'

There are, indeed, differences between Morality and other matters which tend to increase the necessity of caution in attempting to strike out a new line in practical Ethics. I have already emphasized the much greater liability of moral as compared with other judgements to be distorted by our private passions and wishes; and this is a consideration which may recommend Green's useful maxim that, while a man may not go far wrong in imposing on himself some new restraint which is not generally recognized by his contemporaries, he ought to hesitate very much longer before he allows himself any indulgence which the accepted Morality condemns. We must likewise bear in mind the very much greater importance of such innovations in Morality as compared with judgements on mere matters of opinion. The publication of a new theory may aid the progress of Science even when it is ultimately refuted; the harm which may be done by a word lightly spoken against accepted moral standards may be great, even when the particular scruple which is derided may chance to be a baseless one; though we have also to remember the tendency which unnecessary restrictions have to weaken men's respect for those which are necessary, particularly when the unnecessary restraint

is no longer really approved by the consciences of those on whom it is imposed. It is not every occasion on which we fail to see the reason of some established rule, or even every occasion on which we think we see a reason against it, that calls upon us to break the commandment and teach men so [1]. Just the same considerations which make it a duty in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred to obey a law even if we think it pernicious may often make it a duty to fall in with some social convention which we think irrational. There are many matters in which it is of more importance that there should be a rule universally accepted and obeyed than that the rule should be the best possible. This is, of course, the case with the great mass of petty matters regulated by the etiquette of Society, or the custom of nation or class, or, again, with matters so fundamental that they can only be altered by a legal or social revolution. Sometimes, even when we think the rule pernicious, there may be many circumstances in which the evil consequences of compliance are less than those of non-compliance. We are bound, again, to take account of established moralities, even when we ourselves feel it a duty to protest against them. We may feel that the evil of gambling makes it desirable that even moderate playing for money should be banished from respectable society; but, till the rule is established, we are not justified in treating a man who breaks it as an offender against acknowledged Morality or good manners. It is impossible to define the degrees of clearness and conviction on our part which will make it a duty to violate some established rule of our society. It is only important to insist that the *ultimate* standard of right and wrong should be the individual's own, and that he should exercise his own moral judgement even when he ultimately decides that respect for some authority compels him

[1] Simmel, a by no means conservative Moralist, has pointed out how, through association with acts really immoral, the doing of acts merely conventionally wrong may produce upon the consciousness of the agent all the effects of real wrongdoing and so lead to real moral deterioration (*Einleitung*, II, p. 406 sq.). The fact may be used on both sides—as a warning both against lightly disturbing accepted rules of conduct, and against binding unnecessary burdens upon Consciences which do not really acknowledge their obligation, though they may not be sufficiently clear-sighted deliberately to repudiate them.

to act otherwise than he would do if he had no such authority before his eyes. And that brings me to a consideration which has hitherto been left out of account—a consideration of vital importance, which is, however, too generally neglected in discussions as to the relation between the society and the individual in the sphere of Ethics.

III

I have hitherto written as though each individual found himself a member of a single homogeneous 'society' confronted with some one clearly defined, universally accepted moral code or ideal, professed and more or less practised by every member of that society (subject to modification only by his own personal and individual aberrations), commended to his acceptance equally in all its parts by the united weight of that society's authority, and enforced upon him by its 'social sanctions.' In practice we know that this is very partially the case. In a very primitive tribe, or within the limits of an Indian caste, there may be some approach to such a concentration of social Authority; in such societies there may be found a single standard of conduct, unanimously accepted, and in its more important articles enforced with such uniformity that transgression of established custom is almost unknown. But such is not the case at any more advanced stage of moral development. Least of all does this representation correspond with the circumstances of any modern man in any civilized modern community; in any such society there is not one moral ideal but many ideals, more or less exalted, more or less conflicting. It is not merely that different individuals have different ideals; there is in truth no such single 'society' as is contemplated by the conventional way of speaking. The individual is not a member of one 'society,' but of a network of (if we may so say) interlacing 'societies,' each of which has its more or less clearly defined and more or less peremptorily enforced ideal. The schoolboy is a member of one society called his family; the adult outside world is for him largely represented by his Schoolmaster; through literature he is brought into connexion not with one but with a number of more or less harmonious, more or less discordant moral worlds;

while he is also the member of a society with a quite distinct ideal of its own, an ideal forced upon his attention with far more peremptory insistence than either of the former—i. e. the society of his schoolfellows; and even here there may be a collision between the ideals of many conflicting sets or strata of school society. These considerations are of importance for our subject in several ways. On the one hand, it should be observed that the environment which exercises the maximum of social pressure upon the individual is generally the immediate environment. Now the moral level of this environment may be considerably below that of the surrounding society, and yet its 'sanctions' are enormously more powerful. The only public opinion that matters much to an unmarried officer is that of his mess, and there is no guarantee that the public opinion of a mess will be up to the level even of that entirely vague and indefinite 'public opinion' which is supposed to exist in Society at large. Moreover, in certain particular points and respects the public opinion of a man's immediate society is nearly always—paradoxical as it may appear—below the level of that of the surrounding society. For the public opinion of each of the particular groups of which Society is composed is likely to be weakest precisely on those points on which for that particular group the temptation is strongest. The opinion of the 'general public' on the subject of adulteration and tricks of trade is sound enough; but what practically presents itself as public opinion to the average grocer is the public opinion of grocers, or at most of tradesmen at large. The general public condemns in the clergy the practice of preaching sermons stolen wholesale without acknowledgement, and taking credit for their originality; it is among the clergy that the condemnation of it, though not non-existent, is least strong. In many cases the public opinion of a man's own particular group is absolutely opposed to the interests and to the public opinion of the wider society around. It is probable, of course, that every member of this smaller group is more or less aware of the wider opinion; and this wider public opinion will often present itself as an ideal which his own higher self respects, however little he may seek to live up to it. But still it is the lower and narrower ideal

that is most conspicuously illustrated by the conduct of a man's 'neighbours,' and to which the 'sanctions' of public opinion are for the most part attached. It is this fact which renders so futile the Utilitarian attempt to find in public opinion a 'sanction' which will identify the interest of the individual with the interest of the whole, and which renders so deeply immoral (if it is to be taken seriously) the teaching of 'ideal Morality' when it bids a man take as his ultimate moral criterion the average practice of his neighbours—not (be it observed) the ideal of his neighbours, but their actual practice.

The truth is that Philosophers like Mr. Bradley habitually write about Ethics as though the average man were perfectly moral, that is to say the average man of the 'respectable' classes, for they seem usually to leave out of account the most numerous class of their fellow citizens. It is the man who reads the *Times* or the respectable shopkeeper who always does duty for 'the plain man' in practical matters, though (in Mr. Bradley's own case) this apotheosis of middle-class respectability jostles oddly enough with pleas for very startling innovations or revisions in certain departments of Morality. Now this way of representing the moral life is not merely defective; it betrays a want of sympathy with all efforts after anything higher than the conventional ideal, with all forms of moral enthusiasm, with all intenser forms of moral life in every age—with the more enthusiastic Christianity of past or present, with the heroism of Russian revolutionaries, with what is best in socialistic or labour movements nearer home. It misrepresents and caricatures that moral life of the average man which it affects to find so satisfactory. For that average man is deeply conscious for the most part of a higher ideal than that which is realized in his habitual conduct. His conduct would fall below the level which it actually attains if it were not for the partial and occasional influence of the ideal with which his higher self identifies itself: and yet it is not the strivings of the higher self so much as its defeats which most obviously force themselves upon the notice of any one who is prepared to take average practice as representative of the average man's ideal and therefore of his own. The public opinion of our neighbours is not the source of what is best in

the lives of most men: for those who are really struggling towards the light 'the world' often becomes synonymous with all that is evil. It is the public opinion of the immediate environment which is practically most important to a man, and that public opinion often assumes the form of persecution in its dealings with the individual who aims at an ideal higher than its own, all the more because it is secretly conscious that it is higher and truer than its own[1].

The average man is thus normally more or less conscious of, and more or less influenced by, an ideal or ideals higher than that of 'his neighbour's' average performance. But it is none the less important to remember that this ideal is as much a social ideal as the other. The Conscience that accepts it, with whatever degree of clearness and consistency—whether as the deliberately chosen rule of life, or with distant homage as an ideal almost too high for daily practice, or with confused and intermittent allegiance—is not indeed the passive reflection of other people's opinions which it is represented to be by those who insist most upon the social origin of our moral ideals; for (as we have seen) it is only a consciousness that has in it some power of recognizing right and wrong for itself that is capable of education by Society. But still it is a Conscience moulded and educated by Society. Its ideal is for the most part—though not without more or less of modification through the independent exercise of the individual's trained faculty of moral judgement—an ideal built up for it by a society, and received from a social environment. But it is an ideal deliberately chosen and selected by the individual from a number of competing social ideals. Take any person whose actual conduct is in some particular markedly above the level professed and the practice of his immediate surroundings—the schoolboy who stands out against the all but universal bad custom sanctioned by the school opinion, the trader who is impoverished by his honesty, the member of a worldly family

[1] 'Each little society, distinguished from the background of universal humanity by reason of certain ideas and endeavours that are common to its members, represents a social will, which has all the characteristics of an independent reality, in that it operates as a self-active force both on the individuals comprising it and on the regions of life above it' (Wundt, *Ethics*, E. T., III, p. 36).

who gives himself or herself to good works. In most cases you could definitely tell where this apparently isolated individual has got his ideal from. No doubt in many cases he has, in a sense, got it from the very persons who commended it so little by their habitual maxims or their usual practice. For mere ordinary common sense may be sufficient to detect the inconsistency of the schoolboy who is indignant enough against other kinds of falsehood or deceit but introduces an illogical exception in favour of 'cribbing': the dishonest trader has himself denounced the corruption of government officials: the worldly mother may herself have taught her children that it is good to be charitable to the poor. But if there is really nothing in the immediate environment to suggest the higher ideal, the social source of the ideal could still in general be traced in the wider environment. In most cases it could be discovered in an actual personal or social influence—a teacher, a friend, a social group, or a 'movement' with which the person has been in some kind of contact, a book, a preacher, or the higher ideal to which the dullest, the deadest, the most conventional worship bears witness. Even where the individual seems most completely cut off from the society in which the highest ideal is formally professed or actively lived out, there is still through education or literature some contact with a wider environment. The most 'secular' education can hardly keep the pupil in entire ignorance of a literature that is steeped in Christian ideas: the most mundane circles read newspapers which communicate a knowledge of the existence of human suffering and of active efforts to relieve it.

The individual Conscience, however active, still almost invariably finds its highest ideal, or at least the suggestion of its highest ideal, not in any actually new creation of its own, but in an ideal already active in some other soul, more or less realized in other lives, more or less accepted by some actual society of human beings. If any doubt remain on this matter, one may point to the fact that the most original moral teachers nevertheless generally betray the source of their moral inspiration. No doubt the very existence of an absolute moral truth which human Reason has the faculty (more or less of it in different individuals) of discerning for itself implies that those

in whom the faculty is most active should exhibit some tendency towards an approximation in quite independent moral judgements. Nothing is more childish than to assume that every coincidence between the teaching of early Christianity and some other literature shows that one borrowed from the other. But still in the emphasis which is laid on this or that aspect of Morality, in the form which is given to their moral theory, in the more subtle and delicate tones of character, the men of highest moral genius and strongest moral faculty will always show the influence of the social ideal by which their own moral capacity has been evoked. To say nothing of the broad contrast between Hellenic and modern civilization, the best men even within the pale of civilized Christendom rarely fail to show where they got their ideals. The ideals of the best Roman Catholics and of the best Protestants approximate to each other much more closely than those of the worst in each faith, but they are never the same. The difference remains even where the strictly theological side of Christianity has been abandoned. Comte's ideal was Catholicism without Christianity: Carlyle's was Puritanism without its Theology. The difference remains even in the most powerful, the most individual, the most erratic of moral natures. The ideals of Count Tolstoi are steeped in a Christianity which is palpably Eastern, ascetic, half Manichean.

IV

And yet all this talk about the social character of our moral ideas and the social education of the moral consciousness must not blind us to the fact that after all the sole ultimate source of moral truth is the immediate affirmation of the individual moral consciousness. No matter how widely diffused a moral idea may have now become, it was once probably the judgement of an individual at variance with the whole of his environment. No doubt when an idea is 'in the air' as we say, it seems to have occurred to a great many minds at once without any one of them owing it to the others; and, when that is so, each of those minds must have been itself working (to whatever extent it went beyond the accepted standard or the new suggestion received from outside) independently of any other mind.

But quite as often the individual was at first a *vox clamantis in deserto* to the people immediately around him, though other scattered individuals were at the same moment thinking much the same thoughts. Minds may react on one another, but there must be action first or there can be no reaction. No doubt some great steps of moral progress do take place in a spontaneous, collective way in which it is scarcely possible to trace the contributions of individual minds. This is usually the case with the later phases of great movements. But the greatest of all moral revolutions have definitely originated with the conscious work of an individual mind [1], and at all events they originate with the few, not with the many. It is of fundamental importance to recognize the unequal distribution of moral capacity. The men of moral genius are few, and yet it is to them that we owe what now passes for the accepted moral code or ideal of Society. The power of recognizing a moral truth when it is once pointed out is much more widely diffused than the power of independently discovering it, just as the power of recognizing and appreciating good music is more widely diffused than the power of composing it. And yet even this power of recognizing and appropriating moral truth is by no means uniformly diffused. Some measure of it is probably possessed by nearly every human being, though there may conceivably be such a thing as actual moral insanity even where there is no general insanity; and there probably exist large

[1] Wundt is one of the few formal writers on Ethics who, in talking about 'society,' do not forget the 'enormous importance of leading minds,' in the formation of the moral code. 'In the totality of psychical development all individual wills have not the same importance. . . . Hence a theory like Hegel's historical philosophy, which regards the social will as the sole objective ethical force, and holds that the function of the individual will is merely an unconscious partaking in and fulfilment of the social will, is an exceedingly partial view of the truth. Such a theory is a complete antithesis to the equally one-sided individualism of the preceding centuries' (*Ethics*, E. T., III, pp. 34–5). So again: 'the majority of individual wills represent the passive and receptive element; the real force that occasions every alteration and transformation [of social institutions] being exerted by the leading minds. The original, creative intellectual power is thus always the individual will' (ib., p. 36). All this is the more significant inasmuch as Wundt goes to the verge of mysticism in recognizing the 'reality' of the social will.

numbers of people in whom the capacity, though existing, has never actually been awakened [1]. But the higher degrees of moral susceptibility are the possession of the few. When an ideal or a moral rule is said to be accepted by a society (in so far as any beyond the most negative and elementary conditions of social life ever are accepted by so heterogeneous a society as a modern nation), it is accepted with infinitely various degrees of independence and of intensity. It is often only the few whose moral consciousness actually sees the truth of the ideal for itself; the many accept it on authority from the many, and this acceptance may vary from a clear and whole-hearted recognition to a mere reluctant acquiescence which commands obedience only in so far as the rule or ideal is enforced by an adequate sanction.

This unequal distribution of moral faculty prevails as regards all the various elements of which the moral faculty (in its wider sense) is composed—the purely intellectual power of applying means to ends or of applying a principle to the particular case, the power of discerning and realizing universal moral truths, the capacity for pronouncing the judgement of comparative value in the concrete case, the capacity for those various kinds of emotion which are the condition of our passing those judgements. But it is especially and pre-eminently in the power of comparing the moral value of the various elements of our Well-being, and most of all in duly appreciating the higher of those elements, that this inequality is at its greatest. It is here that the acquiescence of the many in the accepted moral standards is most obviously due to the influence of Authority. The great majority of men in a modern community really do believe—not very consciously or analytically, nor with very profound depth of conviction or emotional fervour—but still do see for themselves that it is good to promote the Well-being of Society, or at all events to avoid what is grievously detrimental to it; and they have no difficulty in recognizing that Well-being includes health and food, clothing, shelter and the like. But when we come to the intrinsic value of intellectual goods, how far can this be said to be actively recognized by the majority

[1] Aristotle recognized the existence of men *πεπηρωμένοι πρὸς ἀρετήν* (*Eth. Nic.* I. 9, p. 1099 *b*).

even of fairly educated persons? There is a more or less distinct feeling that the more intellectual kinds of amusement are better than the coarser or more sensual—perhaps not much more. Certainly the idea of serious study (except when directly 'useful') is a common subject of open derision in much society which is supposed to consist of educated men. Many of our professional teachers are constantly enforcing the unimportance of intellectual culture in comparison with athletic exercises and a certain boyishness of demeanour which they call manliness. The judgement that study is good is one which is not actually made except by a small number of intellectual persons, and not by all of them. The influence of the minority which believes in such things is (in many circles) only just sufficient to prevent a life devoted to such pursuits (at least when unpaid) being treated as positively immoral—and this, perhaps, only because 'public opinion' has hardly yet risen to the point of treating any form of idle life as immoral. By the narrower religionists a life of study is often explicitly condemned. When we come to the intuitive judgements on which the duties of Purity and strict Temperance are based, who shall say what proportion of men really see for themselves the moral value of the good implied, the moral worthlessness of the pleasures condemned? And what proportion of those who acknowledge and who practise these virtues would judge the same apart from the influence of the authority by which they were commended? In the vast majority of cases in which these virtues are practised there is, no doubt, a consciousness of the moral obligation which goes far beyond mere submission to an externally imposed rule; in the vast majority of those who do not even aim at practising these duties, and who would loudly protest to themselves and to others that they 'see no harm' in disobedience, there is probably an uneasiness of Conscience which is much more than a mere consciousness that their conduct would be condemned by their stricter contemporaries. But it is probable, also, that in these cases the dimmer intuitions of the many are in a peculiar degree dependent for their own existence, and for the influence which they exert upon conduct, upon the clearer and more powerful intuitions of the few.

V

That the more obvious moral problems are already settled for the individual by the accepted rules of his country, or class, or profession, and that it is, as a rule, not wise for the average man to transgress these universally accepted rules, will be generally admitted by all but the very fanatics of moral 'Autonomy.' But it is often forgotten that it is only in the region of the most elementary Morality that there is this universal consensus. It is agreed that a man should earn his living if he has no 'private means'; that he should support his wife and children, and not ill-treat them; that he should pay his debts, with a possible exception in favour of persons of very exalted social rank; that he should keep the letter of the seventh commandment (sometimes with a similar reservation); that he should not tell any lies or practise any dishonesties except those sanctioned by the customs of his class or profession. That is almost as far as this accepted morality of the community will carry him. But when he gets beyond this, it is often assumed (so far as it is admitted that any further morality is desirable, or even allowable) that the individual who is anxious to do his duty should fall back upon the unassisted deliverances of his own moral consciousness. It is forgotten that, just as it is only by the ordinary discipline of social life that the Conscience of the individual is educated up to the low minimum standard which receives a pretty general recognition, so it is only by a higher social education—by contact with characters, ideals, socially accepted standards of a higher type—that he can hope to carry his own moral education further. The mere preaching of the rule 'Obey your Conscience,' as the whole duty of man, tends to make men satisfied with their actual performance, and to obscure the duty of educating the Conscience. It is often forgotten, even by people who are conscious of the existence of a higher standard of conduct than their average performance, and are not without desire to rise above it, that they are only likely to come nearer to their own ideal by seeking to elevate the ideal itself. For practical purposes, the process of educating the will to more faithful obedience to Conscience, and that of

increasing the sensitiveness of Conscience itself, are, if not actually identical, at least very closely connected. More than this I must not say as to the practical importance of a due recognition of the necessity of what we may call the higher education of Conscience. I must be content with pointing out certain corollaries in the region of strict ethical theory which flow from what has been said as to the influence of Authority on ethical ideals and ethical practice:—

(1) There is a whole group of duties which hardly find a place in most recognized classifications, the duties which may be comprehensively included under the duty of moral self-culture. This will include the duty of doing all the things which the individual has reason to believe (from his own experience or his knowledge of other people's experience) will tend to elevate his moral ideals, enlighten and strengthen his moral judgement, cultivate and discipline the emotions in the way most favourable to the growth of high ideals of his duty, and to the influence of those ideals upon his will. For the believer in any form of Religion, this duty will include worship of the kind dictated by that faith, and all religious practices which really tend in the direction indicated; for the non-believer it will include whatever forms of self-examination, meditation or reflection, instruction or association with persons influenced by the same ideas and pursuing the same ideals as himself may have been found morally beneficial by such persons. Some of the forms of Comte's ritual may fairly excite a smile; but he ought not to be ridiculed for recognizing that disbelief in Theology (whether well founded or otherwise) does not dispense with the necessity of moral culture, and that such moral culture must be essentially social. But I would not be supposed to be merely pleading here for a recognition of the duty of going to Church. The forms and instruments of moral self-culture must vary enormously with time, place, circumstance, and individual disposition, and in no case can the duty be considered to have been exhaustively discharged by simply 'going to Church,' valuable and important as that undoubtedly is to those who share the beliefs which make it possible. The duty is only a particular application of the principle that a man has not

performed his duty until he has considered and adopted the best means of knowing his duty better, and of caring more intensely to do it.

(2) In considering any question of duty on which doubt may have arisen, a man should give due weight to Authority; but the authority to which he should attach weight will not be the authority of the majority, of 'public opinion' (e.g. the *Times* newspaper), or of his neighbours (i. e. the little circle of persons by whom he happens to be surrounded), but the authority of the best men and of the best circles, of the rules and maxims which they have prescribed, of the ideals which have commanded and still command the greatest weight and have inspired the noblest action in such persons and circles. Aristotle was not wrong in the weight which he attributed to the judgements of the Wise; he did not adequately emphasize the fact that when a man's own moral judgement is clear and strong enough he ought to defy the judgement even of the Wise, after he has duly endeavoured to educate and instruct himself in their school.

(3) Of course in the majority of cases—at least where the doubt relates to some question of moral principle as distinct from a mere doubt about the wisdom, say, of some political measure, or some technical matter on which he may avail himself blindly of expert advice—the individual, after availing himself of the instruction and advice of his authority, will come to see for himself the truth of the rule or principle which comes to him commended by the greater weight of moral Authority, though he may not always be sure that he would have found it out for himself, or have assented to it if it had been propounded to him by an authority for which he felt no reverence. But there are cases where it may be right for a man to bow to moral Authority when he finds no clear answer to problems in his own moral consciousness, or even when he feels that his own judgement (in so far as he can isolate it from the influence of his authority) would have been the other way. Whether a man should act on his own view of right and wrong against a consensus of the best men whom he knows will of course depend (*a*) upon the clearness and strength of his own con-

viction, (*b*) upon the nature of the alternative before him. It might often be right for a man to forgo an indulgence in which he sees himself 'no harm' in deference to Authority, where it would not be right to take upon himself the responsibility of what presents itself to his own mind as an act of injustice. The logical basis of this submission to Authority in the more strictly moral sphere is exactly the same as that upon which it is reasonable to rely in any sphere of life upon the authority of others, and it is needless to observe that nine-tenths of our actions are in practice based upon knowledge which we accept upon authority without being able to explain the grounds upon which it rests. We act upon the judgement of the man who seems to us most likely to know; and, when we are unable directly to test the fact of a man's possessing the knowledge he claims, we assume that the man who is most often right where we can test his judgement will be right in similar questions which our own insight or experience is insufficient to decide. We have found that the judgement of the artistic expert has proved right so far as we have been able to follow him; we think he is likely to be right even when we have not succeeded in admiring what he admires. We know by the way he sings and plays that another man's musical powers are much in advance of ours; we infer that he is likely to be right when he tells us that we are singing out of tune, though we are unable ourselves to perceive the fact. And so in the ethical sphere it would be quite right for a man who saw no harm in occasional drunkenness to defer to the consensus of persons whom he recognizes in other ways as men of more delicate moral perceptions than himself [1].

It can hardly be seriously doubted that most good acts of most good men are done without deliberate and self-conscious reflection on the reason why they are good. In most cases their belief is really (as the outside observer can see) dictated by Authority; in some cases the agents are themselves well aware

[1] A friend suggests that it is a mistake to assume that the 'most delicate' conscience is always most likely to be right. I certainly do not mean that the person who has most scruples is the most likely to be right: I should myself regard the ultra-scrupulous person as one of the worst possible advisers in some kinds of moral difficulty.

of the fact. They could give no reason why this or that act is wrong except that it had always been thought so. As a rule, of course, the same tradition, or habit, or example, or association which psychologically explains their conduct causes them also to think that their dislike of such and such an act is the result of their own judgement. The more completely their moral consciousness is moulded into accord with the ideal of their authority, the less are they aware of its influence. But sometimes, in moments of reflection, a man must say to himself, 'I do not know any reason why this is wrong except that it is forbidden by an authority which is likely to know better than I do.' In some cases the considerations which make a particular act detrimental to the general good are too complicated to be intelligible to the unreflecting or uneducated. A great many honest men, for instance, could give no adequate or coherent answer to the question why it is wrong to steal. They would entirely fail if they attempted to construct a clear and consistent theory of Property. In other cases, where the question relates to the goodness of the end, the individual must often either lack the experience necessary to pronounce upon the matter, or be unable to appreciate that the end is good, even when he knows what it is. It is only by submission to Authority that a very ignorant person can recognize that it is not a waste of time to spend many hours a day in study; and there are probably many people besides children who would frankly confess that they could not, if it were not forbidden by the Bible, or the Church, or general opinion, 'see the harm' of polygamy. Without some measure of submission to Authority in moral matters Society could not be kept together.

VI

I know that there are many persons to whom the very suggestion that anybody is ever in his moral action to defer to any external authority whatever will present itself as positively immoral; and who will be quite unable to dissociate the contrary thesis from the idea of 'Priestcraft' or 'State Socialism' (according as the Authority is ecclesiastical or secular), tyranny over Consciences, 'spiritual bondage' and the like. With a view

to meet such objections it may be desirable to make a few additional explanations and reservations:

(1) It is a curious fact that the people who assert with peculiar, if not exaggerated, emphasis the social origin of the individual Conscience are often the people who most strongly repudiate the idea of Authority in Ethics. Yet if a man is never to trust any other moral consciousness than his own, he ought to distrust even his own Conscience, which has been moulded by the moral consciousness of other men. It is admitted that at least in the period of early education a man must accept the undemonstrated assertions of the wise—the *ipse dixit* of parent or teacher. But can it be said that a man's moral education is always complete because he has attained the age of legal manhood? Are not many people, in the moral sphere, children throughout life, and are not the great majority of us children in such matters in comparison with the Saint or the Sage?

(2) Even if it were admitted that the act done in obedience to Authority has no moral value in itself, it has consequences; and the good man will wish to avoid the bad consequences to others of his wrong acts, even if his own unassisted judgement would have failed to anticipate them. Everybody admits that it is right to obey the Physician though we cannot understand the reasons for his advice; and it is surely not merely in technical matters that one man's opinion is likely to be better than another's.

(3) But it is not true that there is no value in an act done from respect for Authority. There will be a moral value in an act motived by a desire to do the best, even though a man may come to the conclusion that such and such an act is the best merely because some one else thinks so. If this were not so, we should have to deny all moral value to the acts of whole generations whose morality has been to an enormous extent based upon obedience to a book or other authority believed to be infallible[1].

(4) It must be remembered that the man has already performed an act of independent moral judgement in choosing his authority, in so far as he has chosen it on truly ethical grounds.

[1] Of course the submission, even when nominally absolute, has always in practice had limits.

It was because such and such a man's character or the known rules and actual practice of such and such a society or of such and such a Religion appealed to himself as the noblest that was within his ken that he placed himself under their guidance, even when in detail he could not feel confident that they were right. To choose one's moral authority wisely is at least the beginning of wisdom in the moral sphere. Acceptance of an authority vaguely discerned (or at first merely suspected) to be the highest—this in ultimate analysis would be found to be the real source of a large part of the best conduct that the world has known, and must still be more or less the case, though the guidance by Authority naturally and rightly tends to diminish with the maturity of individuals, classes, and races.

(5) The respect which the judgement of any ethical authority ought to command must depend upon the extent to which it rests upon really ethical grounds. If another man's advice to me is itself dependent upon an authority which I do not respect, the value of that advice disappears, however much better or wiser I may know a particular adviser to be than myself. For instance, the authority of a good man who may recommend such and such a practice or rule of action is seriously weakened for me if I discover that his judgement is so far enslaved to an ecclesiastical system, accepted on non-ethical grounds, that a doubt arises whether he recommends it as the result of his own moral judgement or moral experience, or merely because he finds it prescribed by the Fathers and Canons of the Church, which a theory of the Church's infallibility compels him to accept: while equally good men who have been brought up in a different ecclesiastical tradition seem blind to the moral advantages of the practice or the obligation of the rule.

(6) It is assumed throughout that our acceptance of Authority does not, and never can, imply a total abdication of individual judgement. Not even the most mechanical moral code could possibly be lived out without the constant exercise of such judgement, and a true moral ideal will emphatically condemn the incessant dependence either upon some traditional body of Authority or upon a living 'director.' Moreover in the last resort, if only the 'voice within' is clear and decided enough, it

is a duty to hearken to it, no matter what the weight of contrary Authority. It is only asserted that it is often right for a man to act upon the intuitions of others when he has none of his own, and sometimes even where his own contrary intuitions are weak and confused. The extent to which confidence in one's own ethical judgement should overrule any weight of antagonistic authority is of course as little capable of exact definition as any other ethical question which assumes the form of a 'how much' or a 'how far.'

VII

The aspects of ethical truth which we have been dwelling on are, as it appears to me, of great importance in dealing with the relation between Morality and Religion. That subject must hereafter be considered more at length. But the view which we have taken will help us to appreciate certain aspects of that relation as it has actually existed in History. It will enable us to appreciate and to justify, at least on their purely ethical side, two important elements in all the historical religions, and especially in Christianity—(1) the authority of exceptional personalities; (2) the authority of the religious community. It is largely because these influences are so completely ignored in the treatment of Morality by professed Philosophers that their accounts of the moral life are often so widely removed from the facts which History reveals.

If the moral consciousness is formed and moralized by the social environment and particularly the influence of the persons in whom the moral capacity of the human soul has reached its highest development, if it is right that in all moral judgements great weight should be accorded to the authority of the best men, sometimes even in preference to the man's own spontaneous ideas of right and wrong, when he finds them confused or defective, then we are able to justify the reverence with which the highest ethical religions of the world have regarded the teaching of their founders, and particularly the altogether unique authority which Christian Theology has ascribed to the life, teaching, and character of Jesus Christ, an authority which is often recognized in practice by many who would refuse to accept

any theological formulation of it. There is no supersession or surrender of a man's own moral judgement in ascribing this position to Christ, if it is by the individual's own moral judgement (seconded and confirmed by that of others in whose moral insight he believes) that the moral value of the authority is discerned.

But while the principles which have already been laid down will fully justify such a submission to the authority of the moral consciousness at its highest, it will also suggest the limits of such submission. Even in respect of this highest kind of moral Authority it is important to bear in mind the limitations within which alone it can be morally healthful for individuals or for communities to acquiesce in obedience to an external authority in conduct. It is clear that such submission can only be morally healthful when the authority is accepted, at least in part, upon ethical grounds. When a certain stage of intellectual or moral development has been reached, it may even be said that the acceptance ought to be based solely upon an independent acceptance of the ethical ideal set up by the authority. For the individual it may, indeed, be quite reasonable that, when a certain moral Authority is once accepted on ethical grounds, respect should be paid to it even in details which may not actually commend themselves to the private judgement of the individual. But this cannot well be permanently the case for the community, or for that inner circle of ethical intelligence from which the community really derives its highest ethical ideas. By the community at large a moral authority can only be healthily recognized because and in so far as the social consciousness accepts and ratifies the ideal set before it by the authority. To accept it beyond this point would put a stop to that independent working of the moral consciousness upon which all ethical progress is dependent. And that comes to very much the same thing as saying that it is only in respect of the widest and most fundamental ethical ideas that we can expect the judgements of any ethical teacher permanently to commend themselves to the world. Even for the individual the acceptance of moral ideas or rules on authority must not and cannot preclude some independent exercise of his own moral intelligence. For even

the most precise moral rules cannot be applied without such an exercise of the independent value-judging faculty. A moral rule may say 'be kind,' but a person whose reverence for kindness was wholly based upon authority would be quite unable to recognize what particular actions were kind. The result of attempting to treat the *ipse dixit* of some moral code—no matter how true and venerable—as a mere external authority to be applied to the particular case after the manner of a parliamentary Statute has been summed up in the adage that the devil can quote Scripture to his purpose. But still more in the case of the community it is clear that changing circumstances and events are continually bringing about the need for fresh applications and developments of existing moral rules, for the revision of old applications of such rules, and for passing judgements upon wholly new questions of Ethics upon which no rules at present exist.

The idea of a unique crisis or turning-point in the moral history of mankind has nothing in it in the slightest degree inconsistent with a due recognition of the principle of development, or even with the idea of perpetual progress in any sense in which it is rational to cherish the hope of such progress. It will be unnecessary to dwell upon the existence of certain unique crises in the evolutionary history of the Universe. Such crises are constituted by the beginning of organized life, still more emphatically by the beginnings of consciousness, and (though here the crisis must be assigned to a definite era of considerable duration rather than to a definite moment of time) by the first beginnings of the moral life. It will perhaps be more to the purpose if we point to analogous crises in the growth of the Sciences. It is quite misleading to treat scientific progress as if it consisted in the perpetual revision of traditional views, in the constant giving up of old theories, and the acceptance of new ones. There are discoveries in the Sciences which constitute epochs, and which are practically final. That these discoveries should always be open to criticism and be held liable to revision, should any need for it present itself, goes without saying, but in many cases there is no reason to apprehend that any such necessity will occur: nor is it even considered desirable to encourage the expectation that it will.

Copernicus, Newton, Darwin are the names which most conspicuously associate themselves with such epochs. After such an epoch there is no going back. Mistakes in detail such heroes of scientific achievement have made, but their main ideas have not been revised; there is no reason whatever for thinking that they ever will be. Not only so, but such discoveries gradually narrow the ground of possible fresh discovery. It may safely be said that in the realm of Physics, for instance, there is no room for any new discovery of the same magnitude with the discovery of the Newtonian Laws. For all time Physics must be based on the discovery for which Copernicus prepared the way, and which Newton actually made. Equally little room is there, I imagine, in Biology for a new idea which can be so new or revolutionary as the idea of Darwin in its most general form, apart from the details of his theory which are and may long be matter of dispute. Such parallels may suggest the kind and measure of the finality which may reasonably be expected in Ethics. That such a crisis in the spiritual history of mankind occurred in connexion with the rise of the Christian Religion, is almost universally admitted; and it is the general verdict of sober criticism that, when all due allowance is made for the long evolution of ideas which prepared the way for that crisis and for the existence of a certain amount of development even in the earliest records of its Founder's life, that crisis was chiefly due to the personality of that Founder. Considering the enormous place in the entire moral life of the world that is occupied by the idea of the paramount authority of the teaching of Christ, it will not, I trust, be thought an irrelevant digression in an ethical treatise definitely to raise the question whether there is anything opposed to a due recognition of the ideal of ethical Autonomy in the recognition of a certain finality and completeness in the 'Christian ideal.'

VIII

It is clear that in many senses of the word there can be no finality in Ethics. The details of right conduct are obviously relative to changing circumstances of time and place. So long as we confine ourselves to means, every new piece of knowledge

in the world alters the details of many duties. It became wrong for a busy man to travel from London to Oxford by coach as soon as a quicker way of reaching his destination was invented. And discoveries as to the relation of means to ends—discoveries in Physiology, in Psychology, in Economics—are continually revolutionizing whole regions of duty. It is needless to give illustrations of the way in which increased knowledge of physical and social laws has modified our conception of our duty to the poor, to the sick, to the insane, to children and the like. And it is not only in respect of the means, but also in respect of the end, that we must expect indefinite change and development. If the view taken in these pages be well founded, duty consists in promoting the true good of all human beings in proportion to their intrinsic worth or capacity. But wherein does that true good consist? At any given moment in the history of the world the individual (in so far as he relies upon his own judgement) must fix for himself the content of that good by his own judgements of value. But, even if his intuitions of value were incapable of improvement, his power of passing such judgements would still be relative to his experience. He can only estimate rightly the value of such things as he knows. But human experience is constantly growing. In all departments of human activity we are continually hearing of the new this or the new that—the new humour, the new Trade Unionism, the new Art, the music of the future, and so on. Each of these new ideas introduces fresh moral problems, which cannot possibly be settled in detail by appealing to any existing canons, any more than it would be possible to apply the old rules of tactics to the altered conditions of modern warfare. It is not that any old rule or principle has necessarily been found to be wrong, but there is no rule at all which is applicable to the new case. The most gifted moral nature cannot possibly say whether the listening to Wagner's music forms an element in true human good till he has heard at least a little of it. The question must be settled by a fresh exercise of the value-judging faculty. In this way and in this sense our ideal of human life is constantly growing and expanding in its actual content. The proposition that it is good to be charitable remains as true as it ever was;

but Charity must now mean promoting for our neighbours a very different kind of life than any that could have been lived in the Palestine of the Christian era.

Now, in view of these considerations, it is clear that it is only in respect of the most general ethical principles that any finality can be claimed for the Christian ideal. The law of Brotherhood—the supreme duty of promoting the true good for every human being—may, indeed, be treated as occupying in Ethics very much the position which the law of universal gravitation occupies in Physics.[1] The law must be accepted simply in the last resort because it appeals to our Moral Reason, and only so long as it does appeal to the Moral Reason of successive ages. But it is as gratuitous to contemplate the coming of a time when it shall be superseded as it would be to expect the advent of a second Newton who will overthrow and supersede the discoveries of the first. And yet, as we have seen, this law would mean comparatively little for us apart from some idea of what the good is. It would mean little to assert the finality of the Christian ideal if we did not include in our conception of that ideal some conception of what the good is that is to be promoted for each individual soul. And for the central elements of Christ's estimate of goods—the supreme value of love, the superiority of the spiritual to the sensual, the value of personal purity, the subordination of sensuous gratification to higher things without any ascetic condemnation of natural and healthy pleasure—there is every reason to expect as much permanence as for the law of Brotherhood itself. But from the nature of the case it is impossible to define more exactly the line which separates the essential from the unessential, the permanent from the temporary, the germ from the full-grown organism. Within the limits thus indicated there is room for a very large development in the moral ideal. The attitude of Christians towards intellectual and aesthetic culture has, for instance, varied considerably

[1] How far this idea can be found in other ethical systems earlier than, or independent of Christianity, it is not necessary for us here to consider. Broadly speaking, I believe the answer to be that it is to be found in other ethical systems, but side by side with a great many ethical ideas which are quite inconsistent with it.

at different times in the history of the Church. That development has taken place in the past is a matter of history. That it will take place, and ought to take place, in the future results from all that has been said about the impossibility of detailed finality in any ideal, the necessity for the constant exercise of the value-judging consciousness, and the consequent need for development in the ethical code. Only in so far as it is supplemented by this principle of development can we regard the association of a moral ideal with a certain epoch and a single great historical Personality in the past as morally healthful and intellectually defensible. That Christianity accepts, and always has accepted, this principle of development through its doctrine of the Holy Spirit would be a leading topic in any reasoned apologetic for Christianity as the absolute Religion.

The dominant school of liberal Christian Theology in Germany—the school which takes its name from Lotze's great disciple and colleague, Ritschl—rightly bases the claim of Christ and of Christianity upon the permanent truth and unique value of the ideal taught by Christ in work, act, and character[1], as recognized by the value-judgements of the individual moral consciousness. That school, rightly to my mind, regards Christian dogma as the progressive effort of the Christian consciousness to express in the philosophical language of the time its sense of the supreme and unique value to humanity of the moral and religious consciousness of Christ, and makes its fidelity to that idea the ultimate test of dogmatic truth. But unfortunately the Ritschlians have exaggerated this 'Christo-centric' tendency in a way which is as inconsistent with historical facts as it is with sound ethical theory. Their tendency to disparage Metaphysic, whether in the form of modern Philosophy or of ancient dogma; their suicidal attempt to rest the truth not merely of Christianity but of Theism wholly and solely upon the emotional experience of the individual Christian soul; their depreciation of all knowledge of God such as is derivable from philosophical reflection or is contained in other historical Religions, it would be irrelevant

[1] Including of course his religious consciousness, his sense of union with the Father and his teaching about Him, of which it would here be out of place to speak more in detail.

here to criticize in detail. What it does concern us here to insist upon is that an Ethic is fundamentally erroneous which refuses to recognize the necessary and healthful interaction between the moral consciousness of the individual and that of the community, the need for constant development in the ethical ideal, the impossibility of a final or supreme ethical revelation which is not also a continuous and progressive revelation. On ethical grounds alone we may say that the doctrine of the Son requires, as its indispensable complement, a doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

It must not be supposed that in asserting that the true ground for the acceptance of the Christian ideal is the fact that it commends itself to the moral consciousness we are in any way disparaging the importance of the life and teaching of Christ in the moral evolution of mankind, or the value of a knowledge of that life and teaching to individuals and communities at the present day. The Conscience of the average man is quite capable of accepting ideals which he could never have thought out for himself. The moral level once attained by a community can only be kept up by the continued operation of the influences which raised it to that level. It is true that ideas may sometimes live when their origin is forgotten. But even in the region of Physical Science education consists largely in the history of past discovery. And there is this difference between scientific ideas and moral ones, that moral ideas and ideals are far less separable from the personality of those who have taught them. The strongest ethical influences are personal influences. To say that the truth of the moral ideal presented by the teaching of Christ must rest upon the appeal that it makes to the moral consciousness of mankind is a very different thing from saying that the influence which that ideal has exercised and still exercises over the world has been or ever can be separated from the influence exercised by the character and personality of Jesus. It is as well established a fact of history and of sober criticism that the Christian ideal, in the form in which it would be recognized by any modern Christian, even if he be a Ritschlian Theologian, does represent much ethical teaching not explicitly to be found in the teaching of Christ, as that the development has flowed from that moral new birth of the world which is

to be associated with his work. It is childish to dispute whether the fountain-head or the stream be the more important to the thirsty traveller; nor need a due recognition of the fact that the main stream of Christian ethical thought can be traced back directly to the historical Christ prevent us from recognizing that it has received not unimportant accessions by the way. The very capacity for absorbing into itself what is most valuable in ethical teaching outside itself constitutes one of the chief qualifications of the Christian 'deposit' of ethical truth to be the basis of a universal Ethic and a universal Religion.

IX

From the point of view here suggested, the notion of an authority residing in the Christian community, so far from being regarded as part of that 'Aberglaube' which it is the business of an emancipated Theology to sweep away, will present itself as a vital condition of our being able to recognize in any historical Religion a claim to finality and to universality. The authority of the Church in ethical as in religious matters means the authority of the Christian consciousness—the growing and expanding moral consciousness of those who in the full and deliberate exercise of their own faculty of moral discernment have recognized in the fundamental Christian ideas the highest moral truth which the Spirit of God has revealed to the world. What from the point of view of the individual is Authority becomes, as I have already insisted, when looked upon from the social point of view, liberty or Autonomy. The ideal purpose of the visible Christian society is to serve as the organ of this consciousness. The Church in its ultimate idea is a society for the promotion of the highest ideal of life, under the guidance of a true theory of the relation of man to God. All that has been said about the existence of many conflicting social ideals, representing a variety of distinguishable though mutually interacting 'societies,' within each geographical or political 'society' tends to emphasize the necessity for a society specially concerned with the promotion of the highest life. That each and every one of the societies commonly known as Churches have fallen very far short of being adequate organs for this purpose is too obvious a propo-

sition to need historical justification. They have all been more or less imperfect realizations of a high ideal. In dealing with the State we have long found it possible to believe in the divine right of Government without believing in the divine right of any particular ruler or any particular constitution. We have found it possible to recognize side by side a divine right of Government and a divine right of Rebellion—to recognize the duty of the individual to submit himself to the society, and to recognize none the less that that submission has limits. It is high time that a similar mode of thinking were applied to the relations between the individual and Society in all its forms and all its organs—and not least in that most important organ of all (according to the true ideal of it) which we call the Church or the Churches.

All that has hitherto been said as to the limit of the authority which the society can claim over the individual needs to be remembered and emphasized with peculiar distinctness in regard to the religious society. A prejudice against the very word Authority has sprung in part from its confusion, both by friend and foe, with the totally different idea of Infallibility. All that has been said about the right and the duty of individual judgement and of self-assertion in individuals and in societies, about the necessity for progress, about the process by which the moral discoveries of the individual spirit are appropriated and enforced by the community, constitutes a protest against that confusion. Sometimes the social consciousness itself is misrepresented by the official organization whose function it is to serve as its expression: sometimes it is the right and duty of the individual to rebel against what really is for the moment the dominant ideal of his society. But, all the same, we must recognize the idea of an ethical authority residing in the society, and the need of a definite organ or organs for the expression of that authority, as a counterpoise and complement to the authority which is rightly ascribed to the highest embodiments of the moral consciousness in the past. For Christians the authority of the Church is required as the necessary complement and development of the unique and paramount authority which with ample justification they have ascribed to its Founder.

The true ideal of human nature is undoubtedly the ideal which has been expressed by the word Autonomy. The ideal is that each individual should do what in the exercise of his own consciousness he sees to be right. But the education of the moral consciousness up to this level is only possible through the action of a strong social Conscience, and the recognition of its authority by the individual, up to the point at which his present knowledge, experience, and ethical insight require its support. It is only through the principle of Authority that the individual enters into the accumulated ethical inheritance bequeathed to him by the past. Apart from social education, each individual would have to start at the level of the savage, and by his own unassisted efforts he could scarcely avoid sinking even below that level. It is the object of social education to quicken and develope the individual's power of independent ethical thought and feeling to an extent which shall make him not so much independent of Authority as unconscious of its influence except in so far as he sees the necessity for going beyond it. If in a sense the individual in the course of his moral growth becomes less and less dependent upon social Authority, in a sense he becomes more and more identified with it. The commands to which he once submitted as mere external commands now become to him the commands of his own higher self: he who was the subject over against an actual legislator now becomes himself the legislator as well as the subject—legislator for himself and, as a member of the society, legislator for others. But this very growth of independent ethical power will have fitted him and compelled him to develope existing ideals further than they have been developed, and even to correct and contradict them when necessary. Even to the last this ideal of Autonomy is one which no individual can fully reach: in a sense it is one which he ought not to reach. The limitations of his knowledge and experience, sheer want of time for enquiry and reflection, the impossibility of becoming an expert in a hundred different directions, must compel him to take on trust the judgements of others as to means, and to a large extent even as regards elements in a true ideal of the good. He must continue, he ought to continue, sensitive to the ethical ideas of the people about him, of the

society as a whole, and, above all, of the best people in it; but he ought also to criticize them and to react upon them. The attempt to deny or ignore the principles of Authority in Ethics altogether would mean moral anarchy: to prohibit the individual from going beyond, and, if need be, rebelling against the accepted moral standard, would mean ethical stagnation and abject 'heteronomy.' In truth the ideal of Authority and the ideal of Autonomy both become absurd and self-contradictory if either is pushed to the point of excluding the other. Reliance on Authority can only justify itself by the assumption that there exist individuals or societies which are ethically autonomous, and there could be no Autonomy in the society if there were no relatively autonomous individuals, or if they exercised no authority over their fellows.

BOOK III

MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

CHAPTER I

METAPHYSIC AND MORALITY

I

THE relations of Moral Philosophy to Metaphysic may be conveniently treated under three heads: the two subjects are connected:

(1) Because any true and adequate account of the nature of Morality must involve certain metaphysical postulates or presuppositions.

(2) Because some of the conclusions of Metaphysic, even though Morality might in a sense exist if they were not true, are of high importance to Morality and seriously affect our attitude towards it; so that, if not postulates of any Morality whatever, they are postulates of a rational and coherent ethical system.

(3) Because Moral Philosophy involves certain metaphysical consequences, or supplies some of the data which it is the business of Metaphysic to interpret.

Like every other branch of knowledge Moral Philosophy implies or assumes certain ultimate conceptions which it is the business of the Metaphysician to examine. But we do not usually consider it necessary to begin the study of a Science by an enquiry into its ultimate metaphysical implications. Mathematical Science assumes that there are such things as space and quantity, and that our ideas about their nature constitute in some sense knowledge of Reality. Physics assume the existence of matter and force: Psychology assumes the existence of mind or consciousness. The ultimate meaning of all these conceptions is matter of grave metaphysical controversy; and yet the

Physicist at least, if not to the same extent the Psychologist, is content to leave metaphysical controversy severely alone. In the same way the ultimate nature of Morality and its relation to other kinds or elements or aspects of Reality are questions which open up the most momentous metaphysical issues. It is no doubt possible simply to assume the existence of the moral consciousness, and to analyse its contents. That is the task with which for the most part we have so far been concerned, though at times (as for instance in the chapter on Reason and Feeling) it has been impossible altogether to maintain the attitude of indifference to metaphysical problems. And that task represents, I believe, the primary aim of Moral Philosophy. That it is a possible task, the object of a possible Science, is proved by the existence of many books on the subject in which there is hardly any explicit metaphysical discussion: while, even in those writers who are most in the habit of insisting upon the intimate relation between Moral Philosophy and Metaphysic, we do not find as a rule that their arguments turn on any metaphysical considerations so long as they are engaged on the questions which have so far occupied our attention. Let the question be 'What is the moral criterion?', 'Is pleasure the chief good?', 'Is Casuistry possible?', 'Why is it a duty to speak the truth?', or the like—so long as they are discussing matters like these, we do not find that their arguments turn upon any explicit metaphysical assumption: they are arguments of precisely the same kind as those which are employed by writers combining the same ethical views with a different metaphysical basis or by their opponents in support of opposite ethical theories. Metaphysic does not contain in itself the solution of any of these questions; and it requires no metaphysical knowledge to follow the arguments commonly employed in discussing them. It is no doubt true that the views of such writers as Kant or Green upon such questions imply certain metaphysical presuppositions; but only in the sense in which every Science assumes metaphysical postulates. Morality, as understood by them, would have no reality or validity if certain metaphysical theories inconsistent with their own could be regarded as true. But then speculatively these writers would also

hold that the same or certain other metaphysical positions are inconsistent with the ascription of any objective significance to the truths of Mathematics or Physical Science. In so far as such writers have used metaphysical propositions for the determination of purely ethical questions, their Metaphysic has often proved a source of error and confusion rather than of enlightenment, as for instance when Green argues that pleasure being in time cannot satisfy a self which is out of time. So long as the Moral Philosopher confines himself to this analysis of the moral consciousness, he is only forced to make metaphysical assumptions in the sense in which the Mathematician makes metaphysical assumptions in asserting that we know certain things about space and quantity and number.

Are we then to say that the real connexion between Moral Philosophy and Metaphysic is no more intimate than the connexion between Metaphysic and any of the so-called 'positive' Sciences? If such an assertion were well founded, it would certainly imply that the majority of Moral Philosophers have been the victims of some strange illusion or some extraordinary accident. There are not unimportant Moral Philosophers who have written practically nothing on Metaphysic, but theirs are hardly the greatest names in the history of Moral Philosophy: and there are few Metaphysicians who have not dealt with Ethics in however incidental a fashion. The reason of this is not far to seek. Speculatively, indeed, it is impossible to deny a very close connexion between sound ideas on the subject-matter of Metaphysics and sound ideas about the subject-matter of Mathematics. Sensationalism, and perhaps some other forms of Empiricism, deny all meaning or objective validity to those necessities of thought with which Mathematics are concerned. But practically we find that a man's views as a Metaphysician exercise no influence upon his treatment of Mathematics. Mathematicians of the most opposite views, or of no views at all, about the ultimate nature of space and time are content to assume the truth of the same axioms; and the different sense in which (if they are Metaphysicians at all) they interpret these ultimate assumptions exercises no practical effect upon the conclusions which they reach as Mathematicians. It is the same

with the Physicist, and possibly even with the Biologist[1], so long as they really confine themselves to the subject-matter of their respective Sciences. It ought theoretically to be the same with the Psychologist, though in his case the isolation of the psychological problem from the metaphysical involves a degree of abstraction which in practice only a trained Metaphysician, if any one, can keep up[2], and which it is perhaps not very desirable to keep up. Nobody in practice doubts that it is shorter to go across the grass in a quadrangle than to walk round two sides of it, no matter how sceptical or sensationalistic may be his theory of space. No physical law is ever in practice questioned on the ground of some idealistic or sceptical theory about matter[3]; nor does the most materialistic of psychologists who has passed beyond the stage of elementary confusion ever ignore in practice the difference between a wave of ether and a perception of blue. In Ethics it is far otherwise. Particular theories about the nature of knowledge, or of matter, or of mind are constantly made into grounds for the denial of the Moralist's primary assumption,—the existence of the moral consciousness and the validity of its dictates; or at least for admitting them only in a sense which revolutionizes the meaning of every proposition included in the Science itself. So long as he is content to assume the reality and authority of the moral consciousness, the Moral Philosopher can ignore Metaphysic; but, if the reality

[1] Here, indeed, at a certain point metaphysical differences (conscious or unconscious) about the nature of Causality are likely to emerge, but they need not emerge till an advanced stage has been reached in the study of the subject.

[2] The same remark may certainly be made with regard to some of the more speculative questions to which the higher Physics lead up, but the ideal of the two Sciences is that they should be as distinct as possible. The uncertainty of division only exists when the Physicist's conclusions are speculative. So long as that is the case, the Physicist is always liable to become, or to be accused by the Metaphysician of having become, a Metaphysician without knowing it. Physical facts, when once established, have simply to be accepted by the Metaphysician. To interpret them in their relation to other aspects of Reality is his business, and not that of the Physicist.

[3] The tendency of Physicists to deny the possibility of an *actio in distans* may perhaps be accounted for by the unrecognized influence of metaphysical assumptions.

of Morals or the validity of ethical truth be once brought into question, the attack can only be met by a thorough-going enquiry into the nature of Knowledge and of Reality; we have to clear up the relation between the particular sort or aspect of Reality with which the Moralist deals and all Reality, between ethical truth and truth in general. In practice it is hardly possible to write many lines about some very fundamental questions of Ethics from which some people would not dissent on metaphysical grounds.

Each of the special Sciences deals with some particular aspect of Reality taken in abstraction from the rest. In Moral Philosophy, in so far as we are considering the nature of the moral consciousness apart from other aspects of Being, we are still in a sense abstract; we are dealing with a departmental Science; but the discussion cannot practically proceed far without touching upon the most ultimate of all questions. We are dealing with such a large and fundamental aspect of ultimate Reality that it is practically impossible to deal with it thoroughly without taking a very important step towards the determination of our attitude towards Reality as a whole. It is impossible that our views on the ultimate problems of Ethics should not be influenced by our attitude towards Reality as a whole, or that our view of Reality as a whole should not be influenced by our attitude towards Morality. It is not from any doubt about the importance to Ethics of certain metaphysical ideas that the treatment of our subject was not preceded by an exhaustive enquiry into the nature of Knowledge and Reality; but rather because it would have been extremely difficult to draw the line between the specially ethical side of Metaphysics and the whole of that Science. The metaphysical 'prolegomena to Ethics' tend to become identical with the Science of Metaphysic itself, or at least with the main outlines of it. All that can be attempted here, consistently with the plan of this work, is to indicate, without fully justifying, the metaphysical positions which in my view are necessary either as presuppositions or as corollaries of a reasonable system of Ethics.

II

The first point of contact between Ethics and Metaphysics lies, as we have seen, in the fact that the former Science involves certain metaphysical presuppositions. There are two directions in which ethical conclusions such as those at which we have arrived might be directly[1] impugned on metaphysical grounds. The attack might be based upon a theory of the nature of knowledge or upon a theory as to the nature of that self with which in Morality we are concerned. It need hardly be said that the two lines of objection are very closely connected. We will look at the matter first from the epistemological point of view.

The tendency of all theories which make experience the sole source of knowledge is to undermine belief in that element of our moral ideas which most obviously cannot be derived from experience: and that is, if we are right, precisely the element which constitutes the essence of Morality. By the doctrine that all knowledge comes from experience is very likely to be meant the doctrine that all that we really know about things is the feelings that they give us: Empiricism does not perhaps in every sense of the word necessarily involve Sensationalism, but the historical 'school of Experience,' in proportion to its thoroughness and self-consistency, has tended to identify experience with mere sensation. Now if we know ultimately nothing but feeling, the knowledge of right and wrong, so far as it is knowledge of anything real, must also be based upon a kind of feeling, or rather, it (like every other kind of knowledge) must be, at bottom, nothing but a mode of feeling. The attempt may, indeed, be made to show that moral approbation represents a specific feeling different in kind from all other feelings: but the upholders of a 'Moral Sense' wholly fail to show why this feeling, however distinct, however much *sui generis*, should have any better claim to be attended to than any other feelings. Of course the constructive Moralist of the Moral Sense school really takes his subjective feeling of 'approbation' to be an

[1] Later in the chapter I shall deal with the metaphysical or theological questions which have an indirect bearing on their validity.

index of some objective reality, but this is just what he has no right to do so long as he attempts to analyse all knowledge into mere feeling. Mere feeling can testify to nothing beyond itself. Feeling again can appeal only to him who feels it: the Sensationalist cannot logically recognize any ideal of what men ought to feel, whether this or that man actually feels it or not. As long as feeling is treated simply as feeling, it is arbitrary to assign to one feeling a higher value than another for any other reason than its actual intensity or the actual strength of the impulse which it excites: all distinctions of quality between feelings[1] imply a reference to an ideal or rational standard which mere feeling can neither set up nor acknowledge. The logical Sensationalist must also be a Hedonist, and an egoistic Hedonist[2]. He may (with Hume) recognize as a psychological fact that in persons of a certain mental constitution the pleasures and pains of others have a tendency to cause pleasure and pain by sympathy: but this (as it is Hume's great merit to have recognized) constitutes no reason for attending to these sympathetic pleasures or pains, or allowing oneself to be influenced by them beyond the point to which one is inclined to go by one's natural taste for this particular source of pleasurable feeling. The consistent Sensationalist can know nothing of an absolute or objective Morality, of intrinsic value, of moral obligation[3].

Even if Empiricism does not take the form of pure Sensationalism—even when it recognizes (that is to say) that knowledge is something more than subjective feeling—it still puts great difficulties in the way of a constructive system of Ethics. So long as Reality is supposed to reside in 'things'—conceived

[1] If quality means anything more than difference in the actual content of the feeling.

[2] It is, indeed, possible for the merely 'naturalistic' Moralist to avoid Hedonism by defining the good as that which we actually desire, and measuring the amount of the good by the strength of the desire, without assuming that that something is always pleasure, but the distinction between desire and feeling is a difficult one for the Sensationalist.

[3] Strictly speaking, of course, even the calculating pursuit of a maximum pleasure would be impossible if knowledge were mere sensation. I am assuming that the Sensationalist does not see that his position is destructive to the possibility of any knowledge whatever, even of what is necessary in order to aim at a maximum of pleasure on the whole.

of as having their nature altogether independently of our minds or of any mind (even though it may be recognized that the knowing mind must possess powers other than a mere capacity for feeling), it remains difficult to recognize truth or validity in a kind of knowledge for which obviously no such basis can be found in 'external' Nature. It may no doubt be contended that the Empiricist is not necessarily a Materialist. He may acknowledge the existence of mind and of mental states in himself and others; these are facts of experience no less than outward 'things.' But if nothing is supposed to be knowable about mind except 'mental states' known by immediate experience and abstracted from all reference to any Reality beyond themselves, there is no possibility of comparing these 'states' with any ideal standard not given in experience, and the 'states of mind' tend to be valued merely in proportion to their experienced intensity, and that is very much the same thing as valuing them merely as sources of pleasure or pain: and, so far as this is the case, the Empiricist's position in regard to Morality becomes identical with that of the Sensationalist. Indeed, strictly speaking, so long as he really confines himself to experience, the question of value cannot arise at all. The Empiricist can know by experience whether things are pleasant: he cannot attach any meaning to the assertion that pleasure is a good unless he understands it to mean that people actually do pursue pleasure. We have already seen that no accumulation of experiences of pleasure and pain can give us the ultimate major premiss which is implied by all Morality; from 'is' to 'ought,' from existence to value, from the actual to the good, there is no way by the road of experience. No doubt it is possible to take up the position that this one particular kind of knowledge has a different origin from that of any other knowledge: that other knowledge does, indeed, come only from experience of external and material 'things,' but that in this one function the human soul is in contact with a Reality which is not material. And, in so far as the Empiricist passes into the dualistic Realist—in so far, that is, as he recognizes the activity of the mind in knowledge and the reality of mind side by side with that of matter—the resulting Metaphysic ceases to

have any direct or immediate tendency to undermine the reality and authority of a non-empirical[1] moral law, except in so far as its inherent unsoundness may end in its own collapse, and so in the collapse of any ethical superstructure which may be built upon it. All that we can say is that the more moral judgements are treated as a solitary exception to the rest of our knowledge, the more difficulty there is in explaining their character and justifying their validity; and the more is suspicion apt to be excited that, in assigning them an origin so different from that of all other recognized knowledge, we are seeking to bolster up a mysterious, 'mystical,' or unintelligible theory in some practical interest.

The more fully it is recognized that in all knowledge—even in knowledge of the most ordinary matter of fact—mind is active or creative or constitutive of Reality and not merely a passive recipient of impressions from the outside, the more fully it is recognized that in knowledge the mind is building up or contributing an essential factor to Reality, and not merely recognizing a Reality which is what it is quite independently of itself or of any other subject, so much the more intelligible does it become that there should be a truth which has no external 'thing-in-itself' corresponding to it, a knowledge which is not derived from mere 'sensible experience,' a Reality or aspect of Reality which cannot be expressed in the language of merely physical Science or of mere psychological experience. The bare supposition that there is an 'external' and independent thing behind our ideas about the thing, that the 'active powers' of the mind merely recognize what is already there 'in the thing,' independently of such recognition by itself or any other mind, has no doubt by itself nothing in it to provoke distrust of the conclusions to which the Moralist may be led by an examination of the moral consciousness. At the same time a position much more favourable to a cordial acceptance of moral objectivity is reached when from admitting the activity of mind in the recognition of the objects

[1] Of course I do not mean to deny that all moral ideas, like all other ideas, are derived from human 'experience' if that word is used in a sufficiently wide sense—to include the power of building up knowledge and ideals which are something other than immediate presentation.

of our knowledge we pass on to the view that these objects exist only for mind, and have no reality of their own apart from mind. Hence the imperishable value of the Kantian analysis of our knowledge, which shows that those special properties which the plain man regards as constituting the very essence of the 'thing' as it is apart from mind are really a creation of mind and unintelligible apart from it—that the 'oneness,' the 'substantiality,' the 'causality,' the 'actuality,' the 'quantity,' which to common-sense seem wholly independent of mind, turn out on reflection to be mental relations unintelligible and inconceivable except in reference to a knowing mind, so that the things that we know have no independent existence apart from our own or some other experience of them. It is true that Kant acknowledged, like all Idealists, the necessity of sensible experience for the constitution of this phenomenal world: though, unlike most of his successors, he assumed that the sensations which (with the relations) go to constitute the world as we know it are derived from an unknown and unknowable world of things in themselves. But these spaceless and timeless 'things-in-themselves' of Kant have so little in common with the ordinary man's idea of 'matter' [1] that the practical effect of this modified or 'critical' Idealism is for Morality much the same as that of the more thorough-going Idealism which absolutely denies the existence of 'things' which are not either mind or essentially relative to mind. And when it is recognized that the very 'things' which the plain man is apt to take as the absolute antithesis of thought, the very 'matter' beside which all mere creations of the mind are apt to appear unreal and phantasmal, are nevertheless in a true sense the 'work of the mind,' the difficulty disappears of realizing that moral judgements may be none the less true and trustworthy, because they are not 'inductions from experience,' or of discerning in the Moral Law a reality or validity which is none the less real because it is ideal. Idealism in Metaphysics, though not logically necessary to Idealism in Ethics, is its natural support and ally. Such a Metaphysic is, as leading up to the recognition of the activity of mind in

[1] At certain moments Kant himself is disposed to identify the 'thing-in-itself' with God, or the world as it is for God.

knowledge, the natural groundwork and basis of a Moral Philosophy which is to be proof against sceptical objections. In Ethics, as in many other branches of knowledge, the plain man who is content to know particular things without knowing the ultimate meaning and basis of knowledge itself, can get along without any Metaphysic at all; but when we are confronted by difficulties or objections based upon a bad Metaphysic, the only solution of them must be found in a better one. And, when once the common-sense knowledge of Morality begins to pass into a systematic study of Ethics, these objections are likely to meet us very early and very persistently. There may be a practical Morality, or even a more or less scientific attempt to analyse and formulate practical Ethics, without Metaphysic, but a purely ethical Science which attempts to avoid Metaphysic must correspond very imperfectly with our idea of Philosophy. A sound theory of Morality implies a sound theory of knowledge.

III

From another point of view our metaphysical difficulties may take the form of doubts about the reality of that self which is presupposed by every constructive Morality. And the answer to those doubts must be the same which has to be made to empirical theories of knowledge. To show that in talking about a self we are talking about something real, we must begin by proving that the existence of a continuous self is implied in all knowledge. Knowledge comes to us piece by piece; and, if we cannot treat the successive moments of our conscious life as successive moments of a continuously existing self, these successive experiences can never be built up into a single world. Deny the reality of the self, and you have no ground for believing in the existence of a world which is only known on the assumption of that reality. Or, from a slightly different point of view, we may urge that objects are known to us only as the correlative of a subject; at least therefore we may contend that the subject is as real as the object, even if we do not (with the thorough-going Idealist) go on to infer that the object exists only in relation to, or as the 'other' of, a subject. Given the existence of a self which

cannot be broken up into a succession of isolated feelings or ideas or psychical atoms of any kind, and which cannot be treated as the *mere* attribute or accident of a material organism, Morality becomes possible. The actions of the individual can be treated as the work of a single self which has a definite character of its own, a spiritual character which expresses itself in those actions, and which is susceptible of spiritual changes and amenable to spiritual influences.

And something more must be implied than simply the existence of the self and its activity in knowledge. It is a presupposition of all Morality that the self is the cause of its own actions. In what sense precisely this must be asserted we shall have to consider further in our chapter on Free-will. Meanwhile I need only notice in passing that this postulate of Ethics is implicitly or explicitly denied by two schools—by the school which regards the self as a mere accident or attribute or bye-product of material processes (a view which cannot be further discussed in this place), and by the school which so completely merges Will in Reason and the individual Reason in the universal Reason that there ceases to be any difference between the acts of the man and those events in Nature or those actions of other men[1] for which no one dreams of holding the individual himself to be in any sense 'responsible.' All alike—natural events, the actions popularly spoken of as those of other men,

[1] This objection is not removed by the simple admission that the mind that makes Reality is Will. Schopenhauer, while he avoids the mistake of identifying the Absolute with Reason, destroys the ethical value of his position by so completely identifying the individual with the universal Will that he regards the individual's sufferings as a just punishment for the original sin committed by the universal unconscious Will in giving birth to consciousness and so to the world, before he, the individual sufferer, was born—a position to which orthodox Theologians have sometimes approximated in their desperate attempts to justify immoral theories of Atonement. Schopenhauer quotes with approbation Calderon's saying, that 'the greatest crime of man is that he ever was born' (*The World as Will and Idea*, trans. by Haldane and Kemp, I, pp. 328, 458). Where a man is made in some transcendental sense responsible for the sins which he did not commit, the practical effect is to relieve him from responsibility for those which he did commit. Von Hartmann has pointed out that Schopenhauer's acceptance of Kant's 'noumenal freedom' in Ethics implies the existence of an individual self which is not recognized by his general Metaphysic.

and his own individual actions—become according to this view mere happenings of which he is conscious but of which he is not the cause, or of which he is only the cause in the sense in which he may equally be called the cause of all other happenings in Nature. By this school the most splendid compliments are indeed paid to 'the Ego.' The Ego makes 'Nature,' but only in the sense that it knows Nature—in the sense, that is, that apart from knowledge there would be no Nature. The self makes Nature not because it determines of what sort Nature shall be, but just because it cannot help Nature being what it is. The very identity of principle between God or the 'Universal Self-consciousness' and the individual self is made the ground for despoiling the latter of any responsibility for its own actions which it does not possess for the events of the world in general. Nor can an illusory share in the responsibility for the Universe and its history be regarded as any satisfactory equivalent for the loss of any individual causality; for, when we turn to the relation between God and the world, we discover that that relation too is resolved into a relation between the knowing subject and the things which it knows. No Causality is recognized in the Universe except the necessary connexion of thought between phenomenal antecedent and phenomenal consequent. Between the events of the world and the subject without which it would not be, there is no relation of Causality at all. God is the universal Thinker (if indeed He is not resolved into Thought without a Thinker), but He is not a Universal Willer. In the same way the actions which the individual self knows are not in any case whatever the events which it causes, but just the events which it cannot help. If Causality is recognized at all in regard to human actions, it is recognized only in the same sense in which Causality is recognized between one natural event and another. The fact that the antecedents of human action are facts of consciousness makes no difference to their essential character. We have a 'psychological mechanism' instead of a physical mechanism; that is the only difference. It is not the self (individual or universal) that is the cause of the action, but an event in consciousness which is the cause of other events in consciousness. The self does not cause these events, but simply

looks on while they happen. Actions are regarded as causing one another in just as mechanical a way as that in which the movements of a billiard ball are determined by antecedent movements. If the series of events which make up the conscious life of the individual may in a sense be spoken of as a kind of self, this is merely the so-called 'phenomenal self'[1]; quite a different self from the self to which the categories of knowledge, and consequently in some sense the existence of Nature itself, are attributed. This phenomenal or empirical self is persistently degraded to the level of a merely animal sensibility; it is the tendency of the school in question hardly to distinguish between the individual's voluntary actions and events in unconscious nature. No doubt the presentation to the self of the successive events which we call human actions is necessary to their happening, but this self is not individual but Universal, and the presence of this world-making Self is only necessary to human actions in the same sense in which it is necessary to other events in the world's history. It causes neither the one nor the other.

How fatal are these ideas to the conception of duty, of moral responsibility or imputability, of an objective moral law to which the individual self is subject, need hardly be pointed out; nor will it have escaped the reader how nearly we have arrived by a different route at the same position as that which is involved in the theory of a purely materialistic Automatism according to which spirits and spiritual or psychical states are never causes but always effects—the accidental bye-products or 'epiphenomena' of physical changes which determine one another (and their psychical concomitants) in a purely mechanical manner. Both theories refuse to attribute human actions to a self; both attribute them to the Absolute or ultimate Reality. That Reality may be differently conceived of by the two theories; the one may conceive of it materialistically, and the other spiritualistically; but in either case we have no room for attributing the causality of any human action to a real human self. And this is exactly what the ethical point of view involves. In what

[1] For the school in question tends to abolish the individual 'noumenal self' of Kant. It recognizes no 'noumenal' self but the Universal Self-consciousness.

relation the individual life and its activities may stand to the Universal Will and its volitions, in what sense all the events of Nature may be attributed to the Universal Self, what is the relation between the Reason and the Will in the Universal Self —these are no doubt matters about which many questions may be asked. But that in some intelligible sense, primarily and immediately, actions may be attributed to the individual self as their cause and are good or bad according as the self is good or bad—that is the starting-point and primary postulate of Ethics. Wherein and in what sense this ethical point of view may be regarded as ultimate, whether it is the truth and the whole truth, or merely a truth which holds at a 'certain level of thought,' are questions of which something will be said hereafter. But that these propositions possess objective truth, and are not as a mere seeming which adequate philosophic insight can reduce to a delusion, must be declared to be a primary and absolutely essential presupposition of every system of Ethics which can attribute any meaning to the word 'ought.' And the very fact that this assumption is a postulate of Ethics is by itself a sufficient reason for declaring that it possesses metaphysical truth. It is implied in the idea of Morality, and the idea of Morality is a datum of the moral consciousness; and the data of consciousness are the only ground which we have for believing anything at all. No doubt this, like all other immediate data of consciousness, has to be harmonized and reconciled with other data of consciousness, if it can be shown that there is any *prima facie* collision or irreconcilability between them, but there is, to say the least of it, an enormous presumption against any 'harmonization' or 'conciliation' which turns such an ultimate datum of consciousness into a mere illusion. To this subject we shall return hereafter: meanwhile I shall merely insist that the existence of our moral ideas has as good a right to be taken into consideration in the construction of our ultimate theory of Universe as any other kind of fact. We must not reject the deliverances of the moral Consciousness merely because they are inconsistent with some metaphysical theory which has been arrived at without taking those deliverances into consideration.

It may be asked against precisely what school or what individual writers these criticisms are directed. I will not attempt to discuss how far they are justly attributed to Hegel[1]. I will only say that it is a point of view which is implied in at least one interpretation of Hegel; and that interpretation of Hegel is precisely the one which has most powerfully influenced, to say the least of it, those through whom Hegelian ways of thinking have become common among English students of Ethics. To say without qualification or reserve that the mode of thought above indicated was that of Thomas Hill Green would be unfair and one-sided. As a Moralist, no one recognized more earnestly than Green the facts of moral responsibility and imputability; but that there is a logical hiatus between Green's ethical system and the metaphysical system with which he sought to connect it is coming to be very generally recognized both among those who sympathize with, and by those who dissent from, Green's practical attitude towards Morality[2]. If no individual self is recognized except a merely phenomenal or psychological self, if the self which is active in Morality is identical with the 'spiritual principle not in time' implied by all our knowledge, if this 'principle not in time' is further identified with a Universal Self-consciousness which is regarded as Reason and is denied Causality or volition, it is difficult to see how Green can escape the consequences which I have suggested. No doubt much is to be found in Green's writings which is inconsistent with such a view. We read much of the strivings of the self (presumably of the individual self) after 'self-satisfaction,' of the self imputing to itself its own actions, of God as a Mind which, though He does not act or will or feel or love, has some vague and undefined connexion with the moral law. But how a timeless self can find a satis-

[1] If we substitute for a 'Universal Self-consciousness' the idea of God considered under the attribute of Thought, and recognize that (in his view) the Thought manifests itself only in individual selves, it may be said fairly to represent (as far as it goes) Spinoza's attitude toward Ethics. Here, as in other matters, Spinoza held, with full and explicit consciousness, the view of the world to which Hegelianism tends, but which the practical aims of its exponents have often prevented their explicitly recognizing.

[2] Green's ethical views are most fully expounded in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 1883.

faction, not previously experienced, in human actions which have a beginning in time; how a self which is not differentiated (except perhaps on the side of the animal organism) from the Universal Self-consciousness can impute to itself its good or bad acts without imputing them in exactly the same sense and degree to the Universal Self-consciousness; how any events at all can be 'imputed' to a self which thinks all things but originates nothing—these are questions which it would be difficult to answer in a satisfactory manner without glossing the text of Green's writings altogether past recognition.

Many minds will no doubt regard a system of Moral Philosophy as very incomplete which does not set out with a much more detailed and elaborate analysis of the self than is to be found in these pages. No doubt a Moral Philosopher may, if he chooses, properly devote much more time than I have done either to the metaphysical, or again to the psychological, treatment of the self. I am far from depreciating the importance of either sort of enquiry. I can only repeat that I have not gone into greater detail (*a*) because it seemed to me that an elaborate and detailed investigation of the nature of the self from a moral point of view cannot easily be separated from the whole body of metaphysical and psychological questions which can be raised about the self; and (*b*) because I should contend that in the whole of the preceding pages I have really been engaged in examining the nature of the self, in so far as that nature is a matter of directly ethical import. The conclusions to which we have come have most important metaphysical consequences—consequences which it belongs to Metaphysic proper to develope and trace out. But I do not consider that these conclusions are *prima facie* inconsistent with any metaphysical theory about the self which recognizes (*a*) that the self is a permanent reality; (*b*) that that reality is spiritual, in so far as it has a permanent life of its own not identical with the changes of the material organism with which it is (in whatever way) connected; (*c*) that the acts of the man really proceed from and express the nature or character of the self[1]. I call the existence of such a self a primary postulate of Ethics, because without it we can recognize no meaning

[1] This point will be dealt with more at length in the chapter on Free-will.

in the language which we are compelled at every moment to use in all ethical discussion. It is the postulate without which we cannot even set out on our ethical journey. Whether there are any other postulates of Ethics; whether, as we proceed with our attempt to understand and systematize the facts of our moral life and to co-ordinate them with other facts, we are not irresistibly led on to make further metaphysical demands; whether there are not in this secondary sense some further 'postulates of Ethics,' we must now proceed to enquire.

IV

We have seen that certain metaphysical presuppositions as to the nature of knowledge and the nature of the self are necessary to the very existence of an ethical system which can be regarded as representing and justifying the deliverances of the moral consciousness. When we have admitted that knowledge is not mere subjective feeling or passive experience, that the self is as real as or more real than any 'thing' of which Physical Science can tell us, and that the self causes certain events which are commonly spoken of as its actions, then we are able to recognize the reality of duty, of ideals, of a good which includes right conduct. And *prima facie* it might appear that the truth and validity of these ideals are independent of any particular conclusions as to the ultimate nature of things which go beyond these simple presuppositions. The man who wishes to see any meaning in the deliverances of his own moral consciousness and to represent to himself the attempt to live up to the ideal which they set before him as an intelligible and rational aim, must assume this much about knowledge and about the self; but it may possibly be contended that he need assume nothing further about the ultimate nature of things, except that it is a Universe, part of whose nature is to produce this moral consciousness of his. And it is no doubt true that the Agnostic (in Metaphysic or Theology) cannot be convicted of any positive inconsistency, if he simply accepts the dictates of his moral consciousness as final, and says: 'I know nothing as to the ultimate source of these moral ideas, except that they come to me in the same way as the rest of my knowledge, or anything as to the

ultimate outcome of this moral life which I feel to be incumbent upon me. I simply know the meaning of the good, and that it is right for me to aim at it, and that I can, to some extent, bring it into existence by my voluntary action.' Psychologically this attitude is a possible one. The term 'good' or 'right' does not contain any *explicit* reference to any theological or metaphysical theory of the Universe. The proposition that some things are right, others wrong, is not in any sense an inference or deduction from any such theory; it is an immediate datum or deliverance of consciousness. The truth is assented to, and acted upon, by men of all religions or of none, by persons who hold most dissimilar views as to the ultimate nature of the Universe, and by men who profess to have no theory of the Universe at all. And it is impossible to say that the words 'good' and 'right' have no meaning for such persons or an entirely different meaning from what they have for the Metaphysician who refuses to acquiesce in Agnosticism. In this sense it is of the highest possible importance to recognize what is sometimes spoken of as the 'independence of Morality.' But it remains a further question whether the true meaning of Morality is capable of being made explicit, and of being reconciled or harmonized with other facts of our knowledge or experience without necessitating the adoption of certain views concerning the ultimate nature of things and the rejection of certain other views. If this should turn out to be the case, Morality will be in exactly the same position as any other part of our knowledge. So long as we refuse to bring any piece of our knowledge or experience into connexion with any other part of it, the particular piece of knowledge cannot be shown to be either consistent or inconsistent with such other parts of our knowledge. So long as that is the case, it may no doubt from a high metaphysical attitude be maintained that this knowledge may not be altogether true, since it may require to be corrected and limited in order to bring it into harmony with other parts of our knowledge: for the only test that we have of the validity of any part of our knowledge is its capacity for being harmonized or co-ordinated with the rest of it. But, from a rough practical point of view, it is possible to be certain of the truth of Science without holding any meta-

physical position at all: and in that sense it is equally possible to combine a strong conviction of the reality or objective validity of moral distinctions with complete Agnosticism as to the general nature of the Universe, though in practice Agnosticism is very apt to involve negative assumptions the irreconcilability of which with what is implied in the idea of moral obligation, can with difficulty remain unrecognized. But after all the question remains whether this refusal to bring one part of our knowledge into connexion with the rest is a reasonable attitude of mind. It is always easy to escape inconsistency by resolutely shutting our eyes to a portion of the facts, by refusing to think or by arbitrarily stopping the process of thought at some particular point [1]. When we ask whether a certain intellectual attitude is ultimately reasonable, we presuppose that we are making up our minds to look at the whole of the facts. Agnosticism is not a reasonable attitude of mind when it is possible to know. And the question arises whether, when the attempt to harmonize and so to justify our beliefs is honestly made, the man who wishes to defend and rationalize his practical recognition of moral obligation may not be forced into the alternative of giving up his ethical creed or of giving up certain views of the Universe which reflection has shown to be inconsistent with that creed.

Are there then any metaphysical positions about the ultimate nature of things which logically exclude the idea of an objective Moral Law? Let us suppose, for instance, that, without giving up that bare minimum of metaphysical belief about the self which we have found to be absolutely presupposed in the very idea of Morality, a man has nevertheless adopted a materialistic

[1] The strongest assertion of the validity of the idea of duty that has ever been made from an agnostic point of view is perhaps to be found in Huxley's brilliant Romanes Lecture on *Evolution and Ethics* (Collected Essays, Vol. IX). It is interesting to see how near the contention that Natural and Moral Law have equal validity brings him to the admission that they have ultimately a common source. What Huxley refuses to ask is whether the validity of the Moral Law does not throw some light upon the nature of that Reality which is revealed both by Physical Law and by Moral Law—whether the belief that we ought to resist the 'cosmic process' and the impulse to act upon that belief are not as much a product of the Cosmos, and a revelation of its ultimate nature, as those physical and psychological tendencies which Morality bids us resist.

or naturalistic view of the world to this extent—that he believes that the origin of the self, and of the knowledge which resides in the self, may actually be traced to certain material processes of a Reality in which previously no mind resided except as a 'promise and potency' of the future. Such a man is not, indeed, technically in the most thorough-going sense of the word a Materialist if he admits that after all a true view of the Universe must include a recognition of the spiritual nature which the Universe has ultimately, by whatever process, evolved. And it is quite right to emphasize the difference between a position of this kind and the old confused puzzle-headed Materialism which was inclined to look on matter and motion as real things and on thought, feeling (with perhaps some not very logical exception in favour of pleasure and pain), emotion, aspiration, ideals as mere arbitrary inventions or hallucinations. But, putting aside for the present the purely metaphysical difficulties of such a position, we have to ask how it must affect our attitude towards Morality.

So long as the ultimate reality of things is regarded as purely material, so long as material process is regarded as the sole cause or source or ground of mind and all its contents, there is always the possibility of scepticism as to the knowledge of which this material world has somehow delivered itself. Our knowledge may be conceived of as representing, not the real truth of things, but the way in which it is most conducive to the survival of the race that we should think of them. Error and delusion may be valuable elements in Evolution; to a certain extent it is undeniable, from any metaphysical standpoint, that they have actually been so. But on the naturalistic view of things the doubt arises not merely whether this or that particular belief of ours is a delusion, but whether human thought in general may not wholly fail to correspond with Reality, whether thought *qua* thought may not be a delusion, whether (to put it still more paradoxically) the more rational a man's thought becomes, the more faithfully the individual adheres to the canons of human Reason, the wider may be the gulf between his thinking and the facts. Arguments might no doubt be found for putting away such an 'unmotived' doubt as to the trustworthiness of our knowledge about ordinary matters of fact—its self-con-

sistency, the constant correspondence of the predictions which it makes with subsequent experience, the practical serviceableness for the purposes of life of its assumed validity, and the uselessness of entertaining doubts as to the trustworthiness of our faculties which from the nature of the case can be neither confirmed nor refuted; though after all such arguments at bottom assume the validity of thought. But these considerations do not apply in the same degree to moral knowledge. It is often possible to explain in a sense this or that particular ethical belief by the history of the race, the environment of the individual, and the like. Such considerations do not shake belief in the ultimate validity of moral distinctions for an Idealist who believes that the Universe owes its very existence to the Mind which assures him of these distinctions (though he is aware that the evolution of his individual mind has been conditioned by physical processes and social environment); but they wear a totally different aspect for one who has no general *a priori* reason for assuming a correspondence of thought with things[1]. The Idealist has every reason for believing the ultimate moral ideas to be true that he has for believing any other ideas to be true, though he realizes that he does not know the whole truth, and that his knowledge of this or ignorance of that element in the moral ideal (like his knowledge or ignorance of ordinary scientific truth) is in part explicable by the accident of antecedents or environment. But to the man who regards all spiritual life as a mere inexplicable incident in the career of a world which is essentially material (were it not for the human and animal minds which it is known to have produced) and as a whole essentially purposeless, there is no conclusive reason why all moral ideas—the very conception of 'value,' the very notion that one thing is intrinsically better than another, the very conviction that there is something which a man ought to do—may not be merely some strange illusion due

[1] I am quite alive to the difficulties involved in the 'correspondence theory' as to the nature of Truth, which have been brilliantly developed by Mr. Joachim in his recent Essay on *The Nature of Truth*, and it is one which no Idealist can well regard as the final and ultimate account of the matter, but any discussion of such a question would be quite out of place in an ethical treatise. Mr. Joachim would no doubt admit that we cannot help employing such language in such a connexion as the present.

to the unaccountable freaks of a mindless process or to the exigencies of natural selection. It cannot be said that a man who allowed such doubts to shake or modify his allegiance to the dictates of Morality, where they do not happen to coincide with his actual desires or inclinations, would be doing anything essentially unreasonable. Reasonable conduct would for him mean merely 'conduct conformable to his own private reason': intrinsically or absolutely reasonable or unreasonable conduct could not exist in a world which was not itself the product of Reason or governed by its dictates.

Another way of putting much the same difficulty is this. We say that the Moral Law has a real existence, that there is such a thing as an absolute Morality, that there is something absolutely true or false in ethical judgements, whether we or any number of human beings at any given time actually think so or not. Such a belief is distinctly implied in what we mean by Morality. The idea of such an unconditional, objectively valid, Moral Law or ideal undoubtedly exists as a psychological fact. The question before us is whether it is capable of theoretical justification. We must then face the question *where* such an ideal exists, and what manner of existence we are to attribute to it. Certainly it is to be found, wholly and completely, in no individual human consciousness. Men actually think differently about moral questions, and there is no empirical reason for supposing that they will ever do otherwise. Where then and how does the moral ideal really exist? As regards matters of fact or physical law, we have no difficulty in satisfying ourselves that there is an objective reality which is what it is irrespectively of our beliefs or disbeliefs about it. For the man who supposes that objective reality resides in the things themselves, our ideas about them are objectively true or false so far as they correspond or fail to correspond with this real and independent archetype, though he might be puzzled to give a metaphysical account of the nature of this 'correspondence' between experience and a Reality whose *esse* is something other than to be experienced. In the physical region the existence of divergent ideas does not throw doubt upon the existence of a reality independent of our ideas. But in the case of moral ideals it is otherwise. On

materialistic or naturalistic assumptions the moral ideal can hardly be regarded as a real thing. Nor could it well be regarded as a property of any real thing: it can be no more than an aspiration, a product of the imagination, which may be useful to stimulate effort in directions in which we happen to want to move, but which cannot compel respect when we feel no desire to act in conformity with it. An absolute Moral Law or moral ideal cannot exist *in* material things. And it does not (we have seen) exist in the mind of this or that individual. Only if we believe in the existence of a Mind for which the true moral ideal is already in some sense real, a Mind which is the source of whatever is true in our own moral judgements, can we rationally think of the moral ideal as no less real than the world itself. Only so can we believe in an absolute standard of right and wrong, which is as independent of this or that man's actual ideas and actual desires as the facts of material nature. The belief in God, though not (like the belief in a real and an active self) a postulate of there being any such thing as Morality at all, is the logical presupposition of an 'objective' or absolute Morality. A moral ideal can exist nowhere and nohow but in a mind; an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a Mind from which all Reality is derived [1]. Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regarded as the revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God.

We may be able, perhaps, to give some meaning to Morality without the postulate of God, but not its true or full meaning. If the existence of God is not a postulate of all Morality, it is a postulate of a sound Morality; for it is essential to that belief which vaguely and implicitly underlies all moral beliefs, and which forms the very heart of Morality in its highest, more developed, more explicit forms. The truth that the moral ideal is what it is whether we like it or not is the most essential element in what the popular consciousness understands by 'moral obligation.' Moral obligation means moral objectivity. That *at least* seems to be implied in any legitimate use of the term: at least it im-

[1] Or at least a mind by which all Reality is controlled. Want of space forbids my discussing the ethical aspect of Pluralism or of a theory which regards spirits other than God as having no beginning.

plies the existence of an absolute, objective moral ideal. And such a belief we have seen imperatively to demand an explanation of the Universe which shall be idealistic or at least spiritualistic, which shall recognize the existence of a Mind whose thoughts are the standard of truth and falsehood alike in Morality and in respect of all other existence. In other words, objective Morality implies the belief in God. The belief in God, if not so obviously and primarily a postulate of Morality as the belief in a permanent spiritual and active self, is still a postulate of a Morality which shall be able fully to satisfy the demands of the moral consciousness. It may conveniently be called the secondary postulate of Morality.

V

That belief in God involves something more than the belief that there is a universal Mind for which and in which the moral ideal exists. There can be no meaning in the idea of Morality for a Being who is mere Thought and not Will. If human Morality is a revelation, however imperfect, of the ultimate nature of Reality, it must represent, not merely an ideal existing in and for the Mind which is the ultimate source or ground of Reality, but also the nature of the end towards which that Reality is moving. The very idea of Morality implies action directed towards an end which has value. If the value of 'good' has its counterpart in the divine Mind, the course of events is itself governed by the same Mind which is the source of our moral ideas, and must be ultimately directed towards the end which the true moral ideal, disclosed however imperfectly in the moral consciousness of man, sets us up as the goal and canon of human conduct. The Universe itself must have a purpose or rational end, a purpose which commends itself as reasonable to the Mind which wills it: and the nature of that end must be at least in part disclosed by our moral judgements. What valid human judgements pronounce to be good must be part of the divine end, and the rest of that end must be such as could, consistently with the principles governing these human judgements of value, be pronounced good.

That an objectively valid Morality implies belief in the funda-

mental rationality of the Universe will no doubt be admitted by some thinkers whose belief about its ultimate nature falls more or less short of what is commonly understood by Theism, who do not believe that Nature is (as a genuine Theist, like Lotze, holds) an effect whose cause is God, or at least who decline to think of that God as 'personal.' Intense belief in a rational principle behind nature combined with much vagueness about the personal, or even the self-conscious nature, of that principle meets us already in the writings of Plato. And a similar vagueness, which might have been supposed to belong to a stage of human thought in which the distinction between subject and object, mind and matter, thought and will, was still imperfectly grasped, has beset the path of philosophic thought in later times. I have not space to defend the position here taken up, or to meet the objections which will at once be raised in many quarters; but I will simply state that to my own mind the only form in which belief in the rationality of the Universe is intelligible is the form which ascribes the events of its history to a self-conscious rational Will directing itself towards an end which presents itself to Him as absolutely good [1]. However inadequate our conceptions of 'Will,' 'Mind,' 'Purpose,' 'Reason,' Personality,' may be to express the nature of such a Being, they are the best we have. Thought does not become more adequate by becoming vaguer. It is not the limitations inherent in human personality that we imply when we ascribe personality to God; but all the positive attributes that constitute man's superiority to the beasts carried to a much higher level and freed from the limitations by which they are in us conditioned [2]. Applied to God, all such

[1] Creation in time, though possibly involving no greater difficulties than any other solution of the Antinomy which arises from the attempt to think of the beginning or non-beginning of the existing world (an Antinomy which has never been satisfactorily 'transcended'), is not necessarily implied by this belief. All that I mean is that the events (whether the series be endless or not) are caused by the Will of God. I quite recognize the difficulty of thinking of the divine Will as antecedent to the series or as a cause which is not antecedent to its effect. This consideration forms one of the difficulties. The impossibility of solving the Antinomy rests upon our ignorance of the true relation of Reality to Time, as to which see below, p. 245 sq.

[2] It may be asked why Morality itself should not be one of the limitations

terms must be understood (as the Schoolmen said) 'sensu eminentiori.' And if the end imperfectly revealed in Morality be the end of the Universe or the end of God, it must, it would seem, be fulfilled. In what sense and to what extent it must be fulfilled, is a question on which much might be said, and I shall return to that question hereafter[1]. But at least it would seem that the end which presents itself to the divine consciousness as good must be so far fulfilled as to make the being of the world better than its not-being: otherwise, we have no explanation as to why it should be willed at all[2]. But can any one seriously maintain that the world as it is—human life as it is—is so good as to account for its having been willed by a perfectly good and perfectly rational Being, except as a means to an end beyond itself? Is human life, whether we look at its moral side or its hedonistic side, so good as to seem an adequate end for such a Being to have willed? If it be admitted that human life, as it is, is not adequate to the justification of the Universe, it may perhaps be suggested that in the future it is going to be so. But apart from the difficulty of regarding as reasonable an arrangement by which countless generations of human beings have been called into existence *merely* as a means to the Well-being of other generations, there is as little empirical justification for an optimistic view of the future of humanity as for an optimistic view of its past or its present. Only if we suppose that the present life of human beings has an end which lies in part beyond the limits of the present natural order, in so far as that order is accessible to present human observation, can we

incident to human personality. I should answer, 'Because the other limitations—such as partial knowledge, intermittent consciousness, liability to be thwarted by other persons over whom one has no control, the distinction between present feeling and the thought of an absent feeling, and so on—we can ourselves see to be connected with limitations which cannot apply to God. There is no reason for supposing this to be the case with ultimate moral principles any more than for supposing that $2+2=4$ is only true from a human point of view.'

[1] Below, chap. iii.

[2] It has been suggested that the not-willing of any world at all may be one of the inherent impossibilities or limitations in God. I should reply that a Being obliged to cause what seemed to Him bad could not be said in any intelligible sense to will at all.

find a rational meaning and explanation for human life as we see it; and by far the most natural and intelligible form of such a world-end is the belief in Immortality[1] for the individual souls which have lived here. If human life be a training-ground and discipline for souls wherein they are being fitted and prepared for a life better alike in a moral and a hedonistic sense than the present, then at last we do find an adequate explanation of the willing of such a world by a Being whose character the moral consciousness at its highest presents to us as Love.

And it is not only the actual amount of moral badness and the actual amount of pain in the world that make it so desperate an attempt to claim rationality for the Universe on the assumption that the life of the individual ends with death. It is the distribution of good and evil—the relation in which goodness and happiness, badness and misery, stand to each other—which it is so difficult to reconcile with that postulate of a rational Universe which is implicitly contained in the claim of the moral consciousness to objective validity. We have, indeed, examined and rejected the idea that Virtue carries with it an intrinsic title to reward, or that vice demands punishment for punishment's sake, but we have discovered in the popular belief about reward and punishment a crude testimony to the rationality of an order of things in which goodness and happiness should go together. The real meaning of the belief that Virtue should be rewarded is that Virtue is not by itself the whole of human good; the real meaning of the theory that vice should be punished, not merely as a measure of social protection but as a demand of absolute Justice, is that happiness without goodness is not the true good. The good, we have seen, is neither goodness nor happiness, but both together[2]. If the Universe does not tend to promote the good, it cannot be rational. And another element in rationality is the Justice which prescribes that, as far as possible, beings of equal capacity shall be equally treated in the distribution of good. A coincidence between goodness and happiness is, according to

[1] As to the reasons for preferring 'Immortality' to a simple 'future life,' see below.

[2] For the sake of brevity we may for the moment ignore all the other elements in the Universe of Good.

the deep-seated popular conviction, a necessary characteristic of a rational world-order; and that conviction is one which, subject to the explanations already given, justifies itself to philosophical reflection. In present human life nothing but the roughest and most general tendency to such a coincidence, if even that, can possibly be discerned. *The* good—the ideal life of our highest ideals—is unknown to human experience. Goodness as we know it, if it brings with it some internal sources of happiness, brings with it also (in its own nature and apart from external circumstances) much internal pain—the pain of sympathy, the anxiety of the scrupulous Conscience, the pain of failure to attain its ends: in fact, in so far as happiness is regarded as including pleasure and the absence of pain, there is hardly any connexion between the possession of it and the moral character of the possessors. Christendom has found its highest moral ideal in one who was a man of sorrows. Whatever be the explanation of such an order of things as a temporary or partial phase or aspect of the world's life, the deeper our conviction of the rationality of the Universe, the stronger becomes our unwillingness to believe that such an order can be final and permanent. Hence it is that a sincere Theism has nearly always carried with it a belief in Immortality. The belief in Immortality has not been due merely to a defective appreciation of the intrinsic goodness of Virtue or of the intrinsic badness of vice; on the contrary it is a belief which is usually held with an intensity proportional to that appreciation. It is a necessary corollary of the rationality of the Universe that its course should be so directed as to bring about an ultimate coincidence between the higher and the lower kinds of good, which are both alike essential to the full and true Well-being of a human soul. So long as it was possible to believe that happiness and misery, prosperity and failure, were distributed in this life on principles of absolute Justice, belief in the rationality of things did not necessarily carry with it belief in Immortality. The Jews were at one time behind other nations in the distinctness of their belief in personal Immortality, just because (it would seem) of the intensity with which they believed that obedience to Jehovah's laws would be rewarded by national victory and agricultural prosperity—a

belief ultimately shattered by the experiences of the Exile[1]. A further knowledge of History and of Physical Science has taught us that, however much we may recognize a general tendency to make man under ordinary circumstances happier with goodness than without it, no complete or even general coincidence between the higher and the lower kinds of good can be traced in the actual course of human affairs. When this fact is clearly recognized, belief in Immortality becomes a postulate of the belief in a rational world-order or (what is for most minds the same thing) of belief in God. And therefore belief in Immortality comes to be (for those who share that view of the empirical facts) a postulate of Ethics in the same sense as the belief in God.

I may sum up the position at which we have arrived by saying that a certain belief about the self and its relation to human action may be described as the primary postulate of Ethics, since the incompatibility between its negation and a real belief in an objective or absolute Ethic is obvious on the face of it, obvious at the level of common-sense thought. The belief in God may be described as a secondary postulate of Ethics, since, though no explicit reference to it is contained in the ethical judgement itself, its implication in that judgement discloses itself as soon as the attempt is made to develope what is contained in the actual moral consciousness and to harmonize it with other parts of our experience. And finally belief in Immortality may be described as in a tertiary sense a postulate of Ethics, inasmuch as it is a postulate of belief in God for all minds to whom the actual constitution of things without that hypothesis presents itself as one which could not possibly be willed by a Being whose nature, character, and purposes are of the kind implied by the ideals revealed to us in our own moral consciousness.

[1] It must be remembered that the Jewish Theology only reached the level of pure Monotheism a very little before a developed belief in Immortality (as distinct from a mere survival which could hardly be called life in a shadowy Sheol) began to appear. And if Theism be held to include belief in a God who is just and impartially benevolent to all mankind, it was certainly not attained by the Jews before the Exile, even if it was ever reached by pre-Christian Judaism at all.

The course of events must itself be governed by the same Mind which is the source of our moral ideas, and be ultimately directed towards the ends which the moral ideal, disclosed, however imperfectly, in the moral consciousness of man, sets up as the goal and canon of human conduct. The Universe itself must have a purpose or rational end, a purpose which a perfect Reason would pronounce to be good. The end which our Reason sets before us as the true end of conduct must be the end likewise of the Mind from which that Reason is derived. This seems speculatively necessary if Morality is to be regarded as ultimately and in the fullest sense rational—rational not merely from the point of view of this or that actual intelligence, or even from the point of view of all human intelligences, but from the point of view of all Reason whatever, universally, absolutely. And, as it is speculatively necessary, so it is, if not practically necessary in every individual case, at least highly conducive to Morality in practice that it should be believed that the ends which Morality sets before itself are destined to be realized. Unless the Universe be rational, no course of conduct can be said to be wholly and absolutely rational; we could only say 'I am so constituted' or at the very most '*we* are so constituted that this or that seems rational to me or to us.' And the Universe is not rational because there is a rational intelligence *for* whom it exists; if it is to be in the true sense rational, it must be directed towards ends which a rational intelligence would pronounce good[1]. I do not say that without this belief Morality would become irrational; moral conduct would still be as rational as anything could be in

[1] Much confusion has been caused by the ambiguity of the word 'rational.' It may mean 'intelligible' or 'reducible to a coherent system such that one part of it could (with adequate insight) be inferred from another.' In this sense the Universe might be rational if it were a sort of infernal machine. Or it may mean (and that is the only sense in which we ought to talk about a reality which includes events as 'rational') realizing an end which is absolutely good. It has been part of the legerdemain of a certain school to prove that the Universe is rational in the first sense, and then to assume that it must be rational in the second, and therefore, it is urged, anything in it which strikes us as bad must be mere appearance. In this way a Universe in which Sin and Misery habitually triumph over goodness is represented to us as eminently 'rational' and therefore as a satisfying object of moral and aesthetic contemplation, if not of religious Worship.

an irrational Universe, i.e. it would seem rational to some persons who think that they see clearly. And a man to whom it appeared good to diminish human suffering, and who desired that which he saw to be good, would still allow himself to be influenced by the desire, even though he thought or suspected that the Universe was very bad—though of course if his view of the ultimate badness of things reached a certain intensity, the encouragement of universal suicide might present itself to him as the only way to attain his end[1]. But a belief of this kind is obviously one not calculated to encourage or stimulate what is ordinarily called Morality. To some minds no doubt the impulse to fight against the evil in a world in which evil was the stronger power would always seem good and noble. But Pessimism is not the belief about the Universe which is best calculated to call forth the highest energies even of the noblest souls. Still less is it calculated to foster the ethical education of those (and they are the vast majority, especially as regards the earlier stages of the individual's moral life) who recognize the intrinsic goodness of the Moral Law, but whose desire to fulfil it is faintly and fitfully struggling against a host of conflicting impulses. The belief that the Universe has a rational end is speculatively a postulate of an absolute or unconditional Morality: and the speculative necessity is one which is evident enough to minds of by no means a highly speculative cast. A Morality which is not absolute or unconditional is not Morality as it presents itself to the developed moral consciousness.

VI

We have been investigating the metaphysical postulates of Morality. There remains the question 'how far can such postulates be reasonably granted?' We have seen that a system of Ethics such as is here defended assumes a certain metaphysical

[1] Pessimists like Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann only escape this consequence by the assumptions (*a*) that such a universal extinction of consciousness is impossible, because the Absolute would create fresh individuals to prevent it, (*b*) that there is such a complete identity between all individual manifestations of the Absolute that there would not be really less suffering even if the number of sufferers were greatly reduced.

position: there remains the question 'Is that metaphysical position a true one?' To answer that question in full is the business of Metaphysic itself, and it is a task which cannot here be attempted. But there is one aspect of it which must be touched on in even the most meagre sketch of the relations between Ethics and Metaphysics. We saw that Ethics were related to Metaphysics not merely because certain metaphysical positions are essential to Ethics, but also because some of the conclusions of Ethics are of importance for Metaphysic. We have dealt with the debt of Ethics to Metaphysic: we must go on to ask what is the debt of Metaphysic to Ethics. And in answering that question, we shall be to some small extent contributing towards a solution of the question how far the metaphysical view of the Universe which we have seen to be essential to our ethical position is on its own merits a true and reasonable theory of the Universe. For the bare fact that the moral consciousness requires certain metaphysical postulates—that without them we cannot explain and justify an important part of our actual thought—supplies by itself a strong ground for inferring that those postulates are true, and for accepting a theory of the Universe which admits their truth. Cardinal Newman has made the assertion that the bare existence of Conscience is by itself a sufficient reason for believing in the existence of God.[1] It would be hard to say how much we should be entitled to infer as to the ultimate constitution of the Universe from the existence of Conscience taken entirely by itself. For the very idea of Conscience, or of the Morality which Conscience proclaims, is unintelligible in complete isolation from other elements in our

[1] Compare Von Hartmann's statement: 'The bare fact that we possess moral instincts is, even taken by itself, the refutation of all anti-teleological views of the Universe' (*D. sittl. Bewusstsein*, p. 465). Most of those who accept Von Hartmann's convincing demonstration of the teleological character of the Universe will fail to find a sufficient explanation of the facts in an Unconscious Absolute who, however, becomes conscious in the act of Creation and, though declared to be identical with individual selves, has apparently a pain which is not *merely* the pain of any particular individuals, since sympathy with the sufferings of the Absolute is appealed to as a powerful motive for Morality, not only in this or that individual, but in humanity collectively. Humanity is invited to bear its own sufferings patiently because they are so much less than those of the Absolute!

knowledge both of ourselves and of the world. The idea of Morality implies a good deal of other knowledge. It implies the existence of a self which knows and feels and wills, of other selves which know and feel and will, of a world which we are capable of modifying to some extent but only to some extent. And, even if this much non-ethical knowledge be admitted, it would be too much to say that the existence of God was sufficiently established if, though apparently demanded as the presupposition of one part of our experience, it should turn out not to be required by, or even to be inconsistent with, other parts of it. If the last were the final verdict which Metaphysic found it necessary to pronounce, we should be confronted with a hopeless antagonism between our practical and our scientific beliefs. If we thought that Morality pointed to a God and Nature did not, we might be obliged (with Kant in his more sceptical moments[1]) to declare that such a belief is indeed a postulate of Ethics, but does not justify our turning this postulate into a piece of speculative knowledge. And even this position, full of difficulties both practical and speculative as it is generally admitted to be, is only open to us so long as we assume that there is at least no positive inconsistency between the view of the Universe to which we are led by our examination of other aspects of our experience and that which seems to be presupposed by our moral consciousness. If the apparent postulates of our ethical nature should prove positively inconsistent with the view of things to which the rest of our experience conducts us, we might be placed under the necessity of admitting that the interpretation of our ethical experience which involved such postulates must be a mistaken one. This is exactly what actually happens with those Philosophers whose Metaphysic does not allow them to concede the postulates to which the

[1] At other times Kant admits that the postulate does give us even theoretical knowledge *that* God exists, though it does not enable us to know speculatively *what* He is. How we can know that anything is without *some*, however imperfect, knowledge of what it is, is a question the bare statement of which is now generally felt to be fatal to the Kantian position. We must either go forward to a more constructive, speculative Theology, or give up an ethical position which compels us to assume speculative positions which we are forbidden to assert to be objectively true.

admitted contents of their moral consciousness would naturally point. Recent writers who tend towards a purely psychological or naturalistic view of Ethics--writers like Simmel, Höffding, and Prof. Taylor[1]—have corrected the crude Psychology of their predecessors so far as to admit as a psychological fact the idea of an absolute 'ought': but they see also that from the standpoint of Naturalism this 'ought' can have but a purely subjective validity—in other words, that it is, from the point of view of the person who has discovered its purely subjective character, no 'ought' at all. Undeniably the conclusions to which the examination of some one part of our nature or our experience might seem to point have constantly to be corrected in the light which is supplied by other parts of our experience. And therefore I can neither (with the believers in 'ethical culture' as a substitute for Religion) pronounce a complete divorce between Metaphysic and Ethics, and declare that Ethics have no need of any metaphysical background or presupposition whatever; nor (with Kant or Newman) attempt to erect a Theology on an exclusively ethical basis[2]. Our belief about the ultimate nature of things must be founded upon an examination of our experience as a whole—not upon any one part of it. It is of the utmost importance to insist that the facts of the moral consciousness shall be duly taken into consideration by any one who attempts to frame a theory of the Universe as a whole: but we cannot exclude the possibility that our examination of the universe as a whole might forbid us to accept the view of things to which Morality, when looked at by itself, might seem to point. We are therefore obliged to ask whether the presuppositions which our Moral Philosophy requires are such as a sound Metaphysic can concede.

[1] Prof. A. E. Taylor has adopted a purely psychological view of Ethics, though it would be unfair to describe his attitude towards the Universe in general as purely 'naturalistic.' He is very decidedly an Idealist.

[2] This attitude of the mind is sometimes described as a recognition of the 'primacy of the Practical Reason.' I should myself be quite prepared to accept the phrase so long as it is dissociated from Scepticism or Agnosticism as to the powers of human thought in general, and is held to imply merely the idea that Practical Reason makes the largest contribution to our knowledge of the ultimate meaning of the world.

A full answer to this question is one which cannot be given in a mere appendix to a treatise on Ethics. I can only direct the reader to the line of thought which he will find developed elsewhere in formal treatises on Metaphysic or the Philosophy of Religion. Amid much disagreement there is a general tendency among those who have really faced the metaphysical problem to recognize the inherent contradictions and unthinkability of matter without mind. An analysis of our knowledge reveals the fact that all that we know is essentially relative to mind. Feeling cannot be except for a consciousness that feels; equally little can an abstract 'idea' or 'content' derived from feeling have any meaning except in reference to a consciousness which at some time or other actually feels. Whatever in the content of our consciousness[1] is not feeling, or a content ultimately derived from feeling[2], is found to consist in relations which are only intelligible to a consciousness which can grasp those relations. The so-called primary qualities of matter—form, magnitude, solidity, and the like—are (as Berkeley was the first to see) just as essentially related to consciousness and unintelligible without it as those 'secondary qualities'—colour, sound, and the like—which the most superficial reflection shows to reside in our mind and not in any supposed thing-in-itself, though Berkeley was doubtless wrong in failing to recognize the importance of the distinction between feeling and thought. The Idealism which begins with Kant has shown that the relations, for instance, which constitute space cannot be analysed into a mere subjective feeling of the individual. It is of the very essence of space that all its parts should be thought of as co-existing and having a relation to each other, whereas our feelings of touch and sight (considered merely as feelings) follow one another in time, and cease to be as soon as they cease to be felt. In the Kantian

[1] Except what is Volition. I put aside, as unimportant for the present purpose, our knowledge of other minds and of what they experience.

[2] e. g. the thought of a blueness which is not at the time being perceived. It is quite true that this general idea, which is neither light blue nor dark blue, but inclusive of both, is something which the eye of man has never seen and never can see, but the judgement that this or that is blue would have no meaning, except as a symbol or representative of the blue sensations which have been or under certain conditions might be actually perceived.

analysis of our knowledge the relational character of space points to its essentially subjective character, in the sense that it exists for mind only, while it is essentially objective in so far as it is not mere feeling but a system of relations and a system of relations valid for all minds whatever [1]. Relations cannot exist in things as they are apart from thought, but only in things as they are for thought; and often the relations are relations between what exists only in or relatively to experience. And the subjective character of space, its essential relativity to consciousness, carries with it the subjective character (in that sense) of all that is in space—in other words, of what is commonly meant by 'the material world.' Moreover, the whole tendency of post-Kantian thought is to show the impossibility of stopping exactly where Kant stopped on the path which leads to pure Idealism. If the world that we know is essentially relative to mind, the suggestion that there may be another world that we do not know and which is not relative to mind becomes as meaningless as the doubt whether after all we know the real nature of this mind which all our experience implies and of that world which we have shown to be essentially the experience of that mind. And yet it is quite clear that the world itself cannot be supposed to exist merely in the individual mind. Thought itself necessarily leads the individual up to the idea of a world which is not merely his world, of a world which exists independently of him, of a world which is common to all minds, but which no human mind knows all at once and in all its completeness. Things exist only for mind, and yet the things that the individual knows he does not create but only discovers. He discovers that they existed before he knew them, before he was born, before (so far as he knows) any mind like his existed upon this or any other planet. And yet, if matter can exist only for mind, there must be some mind *for* which all that is exists: and if the world is one, that mind must

[1] Kant—arbitrarily, as later Idealists hold—practically limited this objectivity to all human minds: for, though he always held that the Categories were valid for all intelligences, he held that we are only capable of applying them to matter given under the forms of time and space, which are the forms of human perception only.

be one Mind. That the world implies a Mind to think it is the conclusion to which almost all Idealists [1] feel driven by an imperious necessity of thought. That that necessity has not always led to an unequivocal acceptance of that view of the Universe which is usually called Theism has been due largely to the one-sidedness with which idealistic thought has fastened upon the cognitive side of our conscious being to the exclusion of that side of it which is revealed in our voluntary action. Recent Psychology and recent Metaphysic have alike directed attention to the will as a no less essential element in our consciousness than thought and feeling. If we are justified in inferring a universal Thinker from the analogy of our own thought, we are surely justified in inferring a universal Will from the analogy of our own wills, however fully we may recognize the inadequacy of such terms to express the different sides or aspects of the One Spirit [2] in which

[1] There are a few thinkers (Prof. Bosanquet is perhaps one of them) who seem to find it possible to accept the idealistic view of things, and yet to suppose that the only thoughts for which the world exists are the limited minds which began to be so long after the world began. Such writers never seem to me to have made even a serious attempt to meet the difficulties which such a view involves. In the system of Dr. McTaggart, with whom the Absolute is simply the sum of individual minds, its difficulty is to some extent lessened by the assumption that individual minds are pre-existent as well as immortal, but still I fail to find in *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, or in anything which Dr. McTaggart has written, a real answer to the question *for what mind* the world (which as Idealists we must admit to exist only for some mind) really exists. To insist on the timelessness of the Absolute does not help us, since (according to him) the Absolute as such is not self-conscious, but only the individual minds which are differentiations of the Absolute, and such individual minds, each or any of them or all of them together, cannot reasonably be regarded as omniscient. The idea of a Mind which is simultaneously omniscient in its timeless or universal aspect and limited in the knowledge possessed by its differentiations in time is one which I cannot grasp or think it reasonable to postulate. In his more recent *Some Dogmas of Religion* Dr. McTaggart has attempted to meet my difficulty in a somewhat different way. I may refer to my review of this work in *Mind* (N. S., Vol. XV, No. 60) as an apology for not having dealt in this place with a system which, though to my mind involving far more difficulties and improbabilities than Theism, seems to me the only non-theistic system which it is difficult to meet with an absolutely conclusive metaphysical refutation.

[2] I should equally strongly assert the necessity for admitting the existence in God of feeling, without which, indeed, the idea of Will is unintelligible, but the argument does not require that I should here insist upon this

we must recognize the ultimate cause or ground of the world's existence and of all the other spirits which (with Him) form the totality of real Being in the Universe.

And this line of thought is supported by another to which I can now only barely allude—the argument which (accepting from Hume the position that we can discern no such thing as Causality in external nature) refuses to accept the denial that in our own minds we are immediately conscious of exercising Causality, and sees in will the only actual realization of that causal idea which is as essential a category of our thought as the idea of Substance or the idea of Quantity. It is a self-evident axiom of our thought that everything which begins to be must have a cause. The only cause that we immediately know of is the self. If the events of the Universe are not caused by myself or by any human or other self of similarly limited capacity, it is reasonable to infer that they are caused by some other spiritual being or beings, and the order and consistency which we discover in Nature is a reason for supposing that the cause of natural events is not many such beings but one Being. The idealistic argument and the argument from Causality thus support one another: both lead to the conclusion that the natural Universe exists only in and for a mind which is both Thought and Will [1].

This bare sketch of the argument on which theistic Metaphysicians rely for the proof of their idea of God will not of course be sufficient to explain it to those to whom it has pre-

point. I may add that I quite recognize the impossibility of supposing that Thought, Feeling, and Will stand side by side with one another and occupy exactly the same relation to one another in God as they do in us, but each of these aspects of Experience—which even presuppose one another—has as good a right as the others to be taken as revealing aspects of the Divine experience.

[1] I have explained and defended the idealistic Theism here assumed in a volume of Essays ('by six Oxford Tutors') entitled *Contentio Veritatis* (1902) and in an Essay on the 'Personality of God' in *Personal Idealism* (edited by Mr. H. Sturt, 1902), but I am, of course, aware that these two Essays taken together form a very inadequate sketch of a religious Philosophy. I may refer to Prof. James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism* and Prof. Pfleiderer's *Philosophy of Religion* for a fuller development of the line of thought here suggested.

viously been unfamiliar. Still less will it remove the objections of those by whom it has been considered and rejected. These few sentences must be regarded merely as a personal confession of faith—as a bare statement of the grounds by which the present writer is led to the belief that the view of the Universe which our moral consciousness demands is also the view to which we are led by an examination of all other parts of our experience—in short, that the postulates of Ethics are identical with the conclusions of Metaphysic. The fact that our moral consciousness demands the idea of God as the source of our own moral ideas and the justification of their objective validity lends additional and independent support to these conclusions.

VII

Though our idea of God cannot be built up on the basis of the moral consciousness taken by itself, the moral consciousness does contribute one most important element to that idea. That the Universe has its ultimate ground in a Spirit who must be thought of as Will, Reason, and Feeling[1], is a view which a rational Ethic presupposes, but which it cannot by itself be held to establish. It is established, I believe, by metaphysical considerations. But a purely metaphysical analysis (so long as it excludes from its purview the data supplied by the moral consciousness) can tell us nothing further about the nature or purposes of that Spirit. That the Universe has a purpose is, indeed, implied in the assertion that it is the work of Reason. The mere analysis of the causal idea may lead us to the belief that it must have an end. No conception of Causality will satisfy that demand for a cause or 'sufficient reason' set up by Reason, in its attempt to explain the world, which does not include final Causality. Even in setting up the bare, abstract idea of a final cause Reason has already, indeed,

[1] To discuss in what way these three activities are related to each other in God is no part of my present task, though after all little could be said except that we do not and cannot know. I fully accept Mr. Bradley's demonstration that we cannot think of God's thought as consisting in the clumsy processes of abstraction and inference from immediate feeling which are involved in human knowledge. But the divine experience must include elements analogous to those which present themselves in our experience in these three distinguishable ways.

gone beyond the region of merely speculative activity, and borrowed a concept from the moral consciousness—an important warning against the attempt to erect sharp barriers between the speculative and the ethical activity of the one spiritual self. For the idea of a final cause implies the distinction between ends and means, and that distinction—the distinction between that which is brought into being for the sake of something else and that which we value and seek to produce for its own sake—is entirely unintelligible apart from that idea of Value or Worth which we have seen to be the root-idea of the moral consciousness. The distinction between means and end lies not in the fact that the former precede the latter, but in the fact that the former are valued for the sake of the latter. Even therefore the proposition that the world has a purpose is one at which the purely speculative reason is incompetent to arrive in entire abstraction from the Practical Reason. It is one for which Logic or Metaphysic must be held indebted to Moral Philosophy, or rather it can only be arrived at by that wider Metaphysic which includes the study of the moral nature of man in its due relation to the other sides of the one Reality. But if, in the ordinary sense of the words, the considerations which lead us to the idea that the world has an end are rather logical and metaphysical than ethical, it is certain that, apart from the facts of the moral consciousness, it could say nothing whatever as to the nature of that end, or as to the character of the Being whose end it is. Hence speculative Reason, if it attempts to answer that problem at all, must borrow not merely from the form but from the content of the moral consciousness.

Is such a borrowing justifiable? It has been assumed throughout this chapter that it is, and we have already added on the strength of it the postulate of Immortality to those of self and God. But it is of great importance to define the exact sense in which we are prepared to say, not only that the world has a purpose, but that we know what that purpose is. It is right to insist (as has been done by Von Hartmann) that the mere idea that the world has a purpose is of infinite value for Ethics, even if we did not regard our moral ideal as disclosing the nature of that purpose. For, if the world has a purpose at all, the ideal which

presents itself to us as a necessity of thought must be in some way included in the purpose. The realization of our ideals may not be the ultimate end of the Universe, but it must at least be a means to that end, and it would be difficult to suppose that it was *merely* a means, and not one of those means which (like most of the means which we employ in human life) are also a part of the end. And this would be enough to give an objective significance and validity to our judgements of value which they could not possess upon a non-teleological view of the Universe. But the suggestion that what presents itself as a necessity of ethical thought may nevertheless turn out to contain no revelation as to the ultimate nature of things seems to me to be as entirely gratuitous and unreasonable as any other kind of ultimate scepticism. To infer from the existence of our own moral consciousness the existence of a good-in-itself or good from the point of view of the Universe, and then to say that our ideas of good tell us nothing about that good-in-itself, seems just as unreasonable as it would be to declare that the laws of Mathematics are valid only relatively to us, that they convey to us a mere knowledge of phenomena which may turn out to be a mere self-consistent system of error containing no information as to the real nature of the Universe or 'things-in-themselves.' It is suggested in many quarters[1] that, while the category of good is one which is valid for God as well as for man, the whole content of that category as it works in us might turn out to be a complete illusion, and that consequently no one of our moral judgements, even the most fundamental, can be supposed to be valid for all intelligences and therefore for God. That seems to be very like arguing that the category of Causality or of Quantity may, indeed, be regarded as unconditionally valid for all intelligences, but that no single concrete conclusion of Mathematics or Physical Science can reasonably be supposed to represent anything but a way of thinking which is imposed upon ourselves by the constitution of human nature, but which contains no information at all as to the real nature of things or the real content of the Mind which expresses itself in Nature.

[1] A more detailed criticism of the writers in question will be found in the next chapter.

The ethical scepticism of the present day seems to be repeating all the mistakes of the Kantian 'Phenomenalism'—the very side of the Kantian Philosophy which, in other departments of thought, modern Metaphysicians are most generally agreed to give up. We have every bit as much right to assume that the conclusions to which we are led by the proper use of our ethical faculty are valid for God and for all intelligences as we have for assuming that the laws of pure Mathematics and the calculations which are based upon those laws must be no mere local prejudice of a particular race of human beings who have flourished during a 'brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets[1],' but part of the eternal nature of things. Our Moral Reason is the same Reason as that which gives us the laws of thought, and the concrete results which flow from them, though a different side or aspect of that Reason. And we have every right to say that the judgements derived from both sides or activities of our Reason must be equally a revelation of that objective truth which is ultimately the thought of God.

Of course there is all the difference in the world between the assertion that in principle our moral faculty is an organ of truth and contains a revelation of Reality and the assertion that infallibility may be claimed for any particular moral judgement of any particular person. We may make mistakes in Morality just as we may make mistakes in Science or even in pure Mathematics. I trust I have already insisted sufficiently upon this distinction. In so constantly comparing the judgement of Morality to those of Mathematics, I do not mean to imply that the possibilities of error are in practice as small in the one case as in the other. It may be admitted at once that these possibilities are very much greater in the case of Ethics.

I will not ask at the present moment in what amount of uncertainty or inadequacy the truths of Physical Science may be involved by the speculative principle that to know anything thoroughly you must know all its relations and therefore must know the Universe as a whole. Mathematical truth is of so abstract a character, the abstraction so complete, and the limitation which that abstraction places to the application of its

[1] Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, ed. ii, p. 33.

results so clearly discernible that there seems no reason for supposing that the fullest knowledge would ever reveal any actual error in conclusions arrived at by what human Reason recognizes as the valid use of the Categories and self-evident principles of Mathematics. They avowedly express only one particular aspect or side of Reality; but there is no reason to suspect that this one-sidedness involves positive error. They are one-sided, but the one-sidedness does not involve actual falsity just because the limits within which the truth holds good are so well understood. In Physics the liability to error is greater, both because of the imperfection of the experience on which the conclusions rest, and because by the mind of a particular enquirer at a certain stage or level of scientific development the one-sidedness and abstractness of the particular department of truth with which each special Science is concerned are not so sure to be remembered, allowed for, and corrected. But even here the errors arising from incomplete knowledge are errors which in the progress of knowledge human thought may hope to correct. The admission of these possibilities of error does not involve an indictment against human Reason as such, still less Mr. Bradley's paradox that all thought, just because it is thought, is necessarily false to an unknown and unknowable extent[1].

Absolute certainty and completeness of knowledge is, no doubt, when you have got beyond the most abstract truths of Mathematics, unattainable enough; but it is a goal to which we are continually approximating, and to which we may hope to approximate more and more nearly as we reach conclusions of the most general character, and conclusions which rest upon the largest mass of experience. The possibility of inadequacy, and such error as may be involved in inadequacy, does not justify the position that Science itself possesses a merely relative or subjective or human or phenomenal validity. Now, when we turn to Morality, we must acknowledge this peculiarity of ethical truth, that in an exceptional degree ignorance of the whole may involve mistake in any particular judgement. To

[1] Of course I am omitting here the explanations and reservations by which the paradox is qualified.

claim absolute certainty and absolute adequacy for a judgement as to what a man ought to do in any given collocation of circumstances, it would be necessary for the individual to have a complete knowledge of all that is contained in the moral ideal as well as a complete knowledge of all those facts and laws which may possibly affect the suitability of the means adopted to promote that ideal on any particular occasion. He would have to know that the particular end which he is now aiming at is a part or element of the ideal end, that it is a more important part or element or representative of the ideal end than any other particular object at which in the given circumstance he might aim, and also that the particular means that he adopts are the best adapted to attain that end. I need not insist on the impossibility of attaining in practice any such certainty. Our judgement as to the relation of means to ends may always be mistaken; our judgements as to the value of any particular element in that end, and still more as to its relative value as compared with other elements, may be erroneous and one-sided.

And there are many other circumstances which tend to make impossible in Ethics the kind of certainty and adequacy which is practically attainable in the region of pure Mathematics or even of the concrete Physical Sciences – the dependence of moral judgement upon the emotional, aesthetic, and other capacities of the individual pronouncing them; the difficulty of explaining and communicating to others the results of any one individual's moral experience; the difficulty of distinguishing between real judgements of our Reason and the dictates of passion or impulse; the absence (when we go beyond certain very broad generalities) of even an approximate consensus, and the like. But all these admissions throw no doubt upon the validity of our moral thought as such, and supply no ground for the suggestion that from the point of view of God or the Universe our existing moral code might turn out to be precisely the contradictory of the true. It is impossible to define the limits of the possible discrepancy between our moral judgements and the perfect moral ideal as it exists in the mind of God. We can only say that in proportion as ethical truth becomes more and more

general, more and more universally admitted by developed minds, more and more internally consistent and coherent, we approach the same kind of practical certainty which we justifiably claim for the main conclusions of Science or History. The judgement that there is a good is a necessity of thought as much as the principle that for whatever happens in the Universe there must be a cause, though there are individuals who have denied both truths. That this good is the ultimate aim of the Universe is a proposition which rests upon the same kind of evidence as the belief that the world and our knowledge of it can only be explained by the existence of a universal Spirit in whom are united Thought, Will, and Feeling. When we come to the detailed filling up of this formal idea of Good, and still more to the question of the means to be taken to realize that good, there is room for much difference in the degree of certainty and adequacy which we ascribe to our judgements. When I pronounce that the choice of a particular candidate at an election will promote the true, ultimate end of the Universe, I may myself see many grounds for doubt and hesitation even at the moment that I make up my mind that it is my duty to vote for him. And I know that many sensible and virtuous persons will vote for his opponent. It is extremely probable therefore that I may be mistaken. That my judgement as to the exact degree of relative importance which we should in our own lives or in that of the community assign to the promotion of Art and to the prevention of physical suffering corresponds exactly with the degree of relative importance which a perfect moral intelligence would assign to them is no doubt extremely improbable, though I may hope that the limits of probable error may be relatively small. But when we come to such extremely general propositions as that pleasures, or some pleasures, are better than pain, or that love is better than hatred, then we may claim for such judgements exactly the same practical certainty as we do for the law of gravitation or for the proposition that an event called the Norman Conquest actually occurred. There may no doubt be a sense in which all scientific knowledge may be regarded as abstract, and therefore inadequate to the reality; in that sense moral ideals may be imperfect and

'abstract,' but to say that in the Absolute our judgement that cruelty and pain are bad must be turned into the judgement that they are very good would be like saying that in or for the Absolute the denial of universal gravitation is as true as its affirmation.

Doubtless the judgements of a particular individual as to a particular moral question may be mistaken and his whole ideal narrow and one-sided. Doubtless the highest ideal that is at this moment entertained by the most perfect ethical intelligence living on this planet represents but a part of the whole aim and plan at which the Universe is aiming; but we have every reason for asserting, and no reason at all for doubting, that the moral ideal which is summed up in Humanity's highest ideal of universal Love, and in a certain estimate of the relative values to be assigned to the various goods which this Love will promote, does represent a revelation, ever growing and developing, of the ideal which is present to the mind of God and towards which therefore the Universe is directed.

VIII

To consider all the difficulties, real or imaginary, which may be found in the view of ultimate Reality which is here presupposed, would lead us further into the province of Metaphysic and religious Philosophy than lies within the scope of this work, but there is one difficulty so obvious and so fundamental that it seems scarcely honest to pass it over without indicating the general lines on which in a metaphysical treatise I should attempt to deal with it. If the world is rational, how (it will be asked) can we account for the presence of so much which our moral consciousness pronounces to be evil, and which, if our view of the relation between the human consciousness and the divine be right, we may suppose to be evil also for the mind of God?

To attempt to show empirically the necessity of evil in the world is a task which I for one have not the smallest inclination to attempt. It is true that we can show without difficulty how some of what we call evil in this world, as it is actually constituted, is the condition of the good. We can see that much good implies a struggle against both moral and physical evil; and

that that dependence of one individual upon another out of which arise all the higher moral or social qualities of man implies also the possibility of constant injury and injustice, and the like. Goodness is developed by opposition; happiness, as we know it, depends on the satisfaction of wants which imply imperfection and, in their intenser form, positive pain, and so on. But it is not so much the existence as the nature and quantity and distribution of evil in the world that constitute the difficulty So much evil seems wholly unnecessary: so much smaller a measure of it in quantity and quality would have sufficed, so far as we can see, to satisfy these necessities. A different distribution of it would seem far more conducive to the highest welfare of humanity than the present distribution of it. Even to attempt to show that there is more good than evil in the world—whether the good be understood in some higher ethical or in the purely hedonistic sense—would be a very bold undertaking. If we were to confine ourselves to empirical evidence alone, I confess that I should see very little to lead us to the conclusion that the world was even good 'on the whole,' or that it had any good end or object in the future. From this point of view the complaints of the more moderate Pessimists only seem to me exaggerated. It is not when they insist on the existence of evil in the world or even on its amount, but when they insist on the non-existence of good, the impossibility of happiness even for some, the worthlessness and vanity of the best that this world affords, that their diatribes seem to represent merely the idiosyncrasies or circumstances of the particular writer. It is only the evidence of the moral consciousness, taken in connexion with the idealistic or theistic argument as a whole, that forces us to believe that the world must have an end, that that end is good, and that the good is in principle the same good of which, in the moral judgements of the developed moral nature, we have a doubtless inadequate but not fundamentally misleading revelation. On this supposition whatever evil exists in the world must be supposed to exist because it is a necessary means to the greatest good that the nature of things makes possible.

IX

But, it will be said, in thus talking about the best possible, in justifying the world's existence because it is good on the whole, in speaking of evil as the condition of good, are we not limiting God? I answer: 'If Omnipotence is to be understood as ability to do anything that we choose to fancy, I do not assert God's Omnipotence.' I am content to say with sober divines like Bishop Butler that there may be some things which, with adequate knowledge, we should see to be as impossible as that God should change the past. And if it be urged that the existence of conditions limiting the possibilities of the divine Will is inconsistent with the idea of a God who is infinite, I answer that neither Religion nor Morality nor, again, reasonable Philosophy has any interest in maintaining the infiniteness of God in the sense in which a certain tradition of the schools is accustomed to assert it[1]. The limitation must not be conceived of as a limitation imposed by the existence of some other 'being'—some other spirit or a 'matter' with definite properties and an intractable nature of its own. The suggestion that a limit necessarily springs from without is due to that ever-present source of metaphysical error, the abuse of spatial metaphor. The limitations must be conceived of as part of the ultimate nature of things. All that really exists must have some limits to its existence; space and time are unlimited or infinite just because they are not real existences. And the ultimate nature of things means, for the Idealist, the nature of God. All that we are concerned with from the ethical point of view is that God should be regarded as willing a Universe that is the best that seems possible to a Mind to whom all the possibilities of

[1] I am pleased to read in a work by a learned Theologian of unimpeachable orthodoxy, the Dean of Christ Church: 'This word [Infinite] is purely negative in its associations; it means literally nothing but the absence of all limits. And there is nothing in it to show that it does not include the absence of all positive existence. Positive existence involves limitations of a certain kind; it is impossible to imagine a being who has not some definite character, i.e. who is not also necessarily without certain other definite characters, and if all positive characteristics are equally derogatory to an Infinite Being, there is nothing for it but to deny His existence' (Strong, *Manual of Theology* (1892), p. 203).

things are known, and who wills the existence of all that is actual because he knows it to be best.

I cannot here discuss all the objections which have been urged against the idea of possibilities which cannot be realized. Putting aside for the moment the question of human Free-will (which I reserve for later treatment), I should admit that this possibility is merely a possibility when looked upon from the point of view of limited, human knowledge. To perfect knowledge nothing could seem possible except that which is or will be actual.

Doubtless a God so conceived is not the traditional Infinite or Absolute of Philosophy. The Absolute is the Being which alone truly is and of which all other beings may be treated as attributes or predicates: our consciousness cannot intelligibly be treated as the mere attribute or predicate of another consciousness. The Infinite is that Being besides which and beyond which no being exists: our consciousness cannot intelligibly be treated as included in or a part of a divine consciousness, though undoubtedly there is a totality of Being in which both are comprehended. Even a single moment of consciousness—whether the most evanescent sensation of an amoeba or a moment of highest insight in the soul of Plato—possesses a certain uniqueness, and is no *mere* predicate or adjective of something else, though it is also an element in, and so far supplies a predicate of, a larger being[1]. Still less can a permanent and conscious self, combining together and relating to one another a succession of such unique experiences, be treated as the same thing as another more comprehensive consciousness, no matter how well the content of the lesser consciousness is known to, or 'penetrated' by, the greater. The notion that God includes in Himself all the individual selves of the Universe seems to have arisen chiefly from a forgetfulness of the essential difference between our knowledge of a thing and our knowledge of other selves. A thing is simply what it is for the mind that knows it; it exists for other, not for itself; what it is for the experience of a mind is therefore its total being. The essential characteristic of a conscious self is that it exists not for others only, but for

[1] That is, in the sense in which we may speak of that which is included in a whole as qualifying that whole.

itself. Its true being is not merely what it is for another mind that knows it, but what it is for itself. Uniqueness belongs to the very essence of consciousness. The 'content' of the consciousness may be shared by another consciousness, may be common to many minds; but this is only because a 'content' consists of abstract universal qualities taken apart from the being whose experience they describe. The content is 'common' to many minds just because in speaking of it we have made abstraction of the uniqueness which belonged to the experience when it was living, present, conscious experience, not yet reduced to abstract universals by the analytic work of thought. Two minds may experience, as we say, the 'same' sensation because, in calling the sensation the same, we have made abstraction of the fact that two people have experienced it. The blueness of which I think is a universal experienced by many minds; blueness as it is actually felt belongs only to the mind that feels it. Even the blueness that I think is the same with what another mind thinks only in respect of its content; the fact remains that my thinking of it and the thinking of it by my neighbour, as pieces of conscious experience, are different. Thoughts as abstract contents are common to many minds; thinking as a psychological phenomenon is always peculiar to one mind. But the Reality of the world is not abstract content, but living experience. Further discussion on this question must be reserved for other occasions. I can only here indicate the view that one mind or conscious experience cannot form a part of another mind.

The Absolute cannot be identified with God, so long as God is thought of as a self-conscious Being. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousnesses, not as isolated and unrelated beings, but as intimately related (in whatever way) to Him and to one another and as forming with Him a system or Unity. And, in so far as God is not any of these spirits (when once they have come into being), however they may be ultimately related to Him, He is not, in the most obvious sense of the word, infinite. We may, if we like, call God infinite in the sense that there is no other Being but what proceeds ultimately from His will and has its source or ground in Him;

and this seems to be all that is meant by many of those who are attached to the term; but the term 'infinite' would seem more properly to belong to that Absolute which includes God and other spirits. It may even be doubted whether it is well to apply the term infinite to anything but space and time (which are not real beings), and whether it is possible to apply it to anything that has real being without being more or less misled in our interpretation of the term by the analogy of space and time. There must be a definite amount of Being in the world [1]. Whether we say that from some point of view transcending time there is eternally a definite amount which can be neither increased nor diminished, or whether we content ourselves with maintaining that at any one moment there is a definite amount of Being in the world, will depend upon the view we take of that most difficult of all metaphysical problems—the ultimate nature of time [2]. Avoiding any attempt to deal in a summary way with that profound question, I will only say that in my view metaphysical and ethical considerations alike require us to recognize a real distinction between God and the lesser spirits who derive their being from Him, yet remain in intimate relation to and dependence upon Him, and with Him make up the totality of real Being in the world. If we must use a word which might well be dispensed with, God and the spirits are the Absolute—not God alone. Together they form a Unity, but that Unity is not the unity of self-consciousness; nor can it, without serious danger of misunderstanding, be thought of as even analogous

[1] We might of course say that the Absolute is infinite in so far as time and space form aspects of its being. It will be observed that I do not here assert that God is finite, for experience shows that (in spite of all protests and explanations) it is impossible to use the term without being supposed by careless or prejudiced critics to imply the idea that God is limited by a plurality of independent, unoriginated, and isolated centres of consciousness, and provoking pleasantries about polytheism and the like.

[2] The notion that the total amount of 'Being' in the world cannot be increased seems to arise either (1) from a mere misapplication of the physical doctrine of the indestructibility of *Matter*, or (2) from taking 'Being' to mean not consciousness but the ultimate ground of consciousness. That the amount of 'consciousness' or 'conscious being' in the Universe is increased or diminished at different times is a truth which we prove every time we go to sleep.

to that personal unity which is characteristic of consciousness in the highest form in which we know it.

I cannot but suspect that those who insist that all minds are ultimately one with each other and with the divine mind are partly under the influence of a confusion between 'consciousness' and 'mind' understood in some sense in which it is regarded not as equivalent to consciousness or the conscious, but as the ultimate ground or basis of consciousness. That a certain unity of 'substance' or 'essence' may be ascribed to all minds in the Universe is an intelligible proposition. And there is no harm in such language if we can only keep the idea of Substance free from spacial and naturalistic associations, and also interpret it in such a way as not to exclude the idea of 'activity' or 'power' or 'will.' It is no doubt quite true that every consciousness in the Universe at every moment of its existence, while it may be looked upon as itself power or will, must also be looked upon as an effect or manifestation of the single Will to which all things and all spirits owe their being, though *qua* consciousness it is distinct from that and every other consciousness. From this point of view the 'unity of substance' doctrine expresses only what the old Theology expressed in holding that the world (including souls) was upheld by a continuous act of divine conservation.

The ultimate Being, we may say, is One—a single Power, if we like we may even say a single Being, which is manifested in a plurality of consciousnesses, one consciousness which is omniscient and eternal, and many consciousnesses which are of limited knowledge, which have a beginning and some of which, it is possible or probable, have an end. We may, if we like, regard all the separate 'centres of consciousness' as 'manifestations' of a single Being; but if so, we must distinctly remember, if we are Idealists and refuse to regard as ultimately real any being which is not conscious, that this 'Being' has no existence except in the separate centres. God may be conceived of as the cause or source of all the centres except Himself, and may know them through and through; but to deny that *qua* consciousness He is distinguishable from those other centres of consciousness represents a line of thought which, when

thoroughly followed out, must end (as historically it always does end) *either* in the denial of all reality, permanence, independence, or personality to the individual souls and the reduction of all individuality to a mere delusive appearance, *or* to a conception of God which no longer includes the idea of self-consciousness at all. And both ideas—God and the self—are necessary to Morality and to any Religion that is to be consistent with the demands of our moral consciousness.

The ethical importance of this view of the relation between God and individual souls, which it is impossible here further to develope or to defend, lies in the following considerations:

(*a*) Only where a real distinction can be recognized between the divine Mind and the individual minds to which it has given being can we attribute good or bad acts to the individual man without attributing them *in the same sense and degree* to God. Whether in any more ultimate sense God may or may not be regarded as the cause of our good and bad actions is a question which I reserve for separate treatment. I only insist here that there must be a real meaning in regarding them as acts of the individual.

(*b*) Only if it is recognized that our moral judgements are expressive of the real nature of things, and that therefore the evil of the world is not evil merely from our point of view, is there an intelligible meaning in ascribing to God the character which our moral consciousness recognizes as good. The ethical necessity of this conception has already been dealt with.

(*c*) Only where it is recognized that God's action, though directed to the best that is possible, is limited by those eternal necessities which are part of his own eternal nature, is it possible to combine the assertion of his moral perfection with the recognition of real objective validity in those judgements of our moral consciousness which pronounce many things in the world to be intrinsically evil, however much they may ultimately be conducive to a higher good. Only when this is admitted, does it become possible to acknowledge that a rightly directed human action is conducive to the true objective good of the Universe. If it be supposed that bad actions, just in proportion as they are actually committed, tend to the good of the Universe

as much as good ones, we immediately remove all motive for abstaining from any so-called bad act to which we may be inclined. On such a hypothesis the fact that the bad act occurs is a sufficient proof that a good act in the like place would have retarded the true end of the Universe. On this view there is no answer to the suggestion that it were well to 'continue in sin that grace may abound.' On our view the bad may be the necessary means to a greater good, but it remains bad all the same. The Universe without that act (had its absence been possible or in accordance with the actual nature of the world) would have been better still. The whole value of Metaphysic or Theology to Ethics lies in its allowing us to ascribe an objective significance to the moral law. And this objective significance is destroyed the moment it is admitted that what our moral Reason pronounces, and rightly pronounces, to be bad may nevertheless from the point of view of a higher and completer view be very good. A Metaphysic that is optimistic in this sense is as fruitful a source of acute demoralization as the Theology which makes moral distinctions depend upon the arbitrary will of God[1]. In certain of their manifestations the two forms of thought tend to become absolutely indistinguishable. Once let it be admitted that a bad act can under no conceivable circumstances really take anything away from the true good of the Universe or be really opposed to the ultimate aim of the Spirit to which the Universe owes its being, and Morality, as it presents itself to the unsophisticated moral consciousness, exists no more[2]. Hence to the three postulates

[1] I confess I feel strongly tempted to adopt the words of Schopenhauer: 'I cannot here avoid the statement that, to me, *optimism*, when it is not merely the thoughtless talk of such as harbour nothing but words under their low foreheads, appears not merely as an absurd, but also as a really *wicked* way of thinking, as a bitter mockery of the unspeakable suffering of humanity' (*The World as Will and Idea*, Eng. Trans., I. 420). Of course Optimism must here be understood to mean the belief that the world and everything in it are perfectly good—not the creed that the world on the whole is tending towards the good.

[2] The point of view against which I protest is forcibly expressed by Prof. Taylor: 'Hence for Religion the classification of acts and men as "good" and "bad" must appear unsatisfactory and superficial. For, on the one hand, ultimately all acts and all characters are good as fulfilling,

of Ethics which I have already enumerated I propose to add a fourth—the negation of Optimism, the assertion that not everything in the Universe is very good, and that the distinction between good and evil belongs to the real nature of things and not merely to appearance.

X

I am quite aware how incomplete such a treatment of the relation between Metaphysics and Ethics as the present must be in the absence of a complete discussion of those logical and metaphysical questions as to the relation of knowledge to Reality which lie at the root of the whole matter. On that momentous question I will only make one remark. That all our human knowledge is inadequate to express the true nature of the ultimate Reality will be universally admitted by Metaphysicians of almost

each in its own place, the perfect world system, and on the other every act and every character is bad as failing to realise the perfect world-system in more than an infinitesimal fragment of its concrete fullness. Religion thus knows nothing of merit and demerit. Instead of the customary classification of men as on the one hand respectable and good, and on the other hand as disreputable and bad, it substitutes a double estimate according to which, on the one hand, the outcast and the sinner are already, as members of the perfect world order, really perfect *if they only had the faith to perceive it*, and on the other all men alike—the man of rigid virtue and strict habits no less than the reprobate—are equally condemned and equally guilty before God' (*The Problem of Conduct*, pp. 473, 474). But why the qualification I have italicized? On the premisses they must be as good whether they have faith to perceive it or not; and some (perhaps fortunately) have not this faith. Optimism always breaks down somewhere. If Professor Taylor means that the world is equally perfect whether they perceive it or not, he has omitted to show that they are likely to be the better if they do perceive it, and if he admits that they are not, he has failed to point out any ultimate justification for the relative authority (as regards human beings) which he himself claims for Morality. If Religion (as Professor Taylor assumes) makes men think a bad act to be really (if actually committed) equally conducive to the true end of the Universe with a good one, and so more likely to commit bad acts, what right have men (on whom human Morality is, by his own admission, binding) to be religious?

It is instructive to notice that Dr. McTaggart has now retracted his former view as to the perfection of the Universe. To any reader who is unsatisfied by this slight and fragmentary treatment of the question I may commend Dr. McTaggart's chapter on 'God as Omnipotent' in *Some Dogmas of Religion*. As to Professor Taylor's change of view, see below, p. 285.

all schools. The only serious question must be as to the kind and the degree of the inadequacy, and as to the answer that is given to the enquiry how far it is possible to arrive at any clearer and more adequate knowledge of Reality by denying and seeking to 'transcend,' as the phrase is, distinctions which are admittedly inherent in the very nature and constitution of human thought. That question will be further dealt with in the following chapter, but meanwhile there is one particular source of imperfection in our knowledge to which a momentary reference must be made. It will, doubtless, be contended that my argument has assumed the absolute validity of our ideas of Time. Here, too, the real problem is as to the amount and kind of inadequacy which is involved in this particular condition of human thought. What I should contend, if I had the opportunity, would be that our time-distinctions must express, however inadequately, the true nature of Reality, and that the attempt to think of Reality as out of time or timeless is certain to lead us further astray from the truth than the assertion that time-distinctions are valid, though we cannot tell in what way they present themselves to God or how far they express the full truth about Reality as a whole. If the position that Reality is out of time makes it impossible to ascribe objective validity to our judgements of value, compels us to distort and virtually contradict the ethical part of our thought, and forbids us to give its proper weight to that side of our nature in our speculative construction of ultimate Reality, that is one further objection to such theories. The doctrine of a timeless Reality makes the world's history unmeaning and all human effort vain. The Buddhists, whose Creed is often patronized by our modern believers in a timeless Absolute, at least have the merit of admitting that corollary of their system, however much inconsistency and contradiction there may be in the anti-social ascetic's effort to escape from effort. The Western who uses this language about the vanity of all that is temporal neither believes it nor acts as if he believed it. Time and its distinctions, as we know them, may not express the whole truth about the Universe and the ultimate spiritual ground of it, but at least they must express more of it than a to us meaningless negation like timelessness.

If there be any meaning in the idea of transcending time-distinctions, that meaning must be something other than that of merely negating and abolishing them, and it is only on the assumption that from the point of view of absolute knowledge time-distinctions are simply negated and abolished that the temporal character of our moral thinking can be used as an argument for denying its objective validity and refusing to admit the postulates which that objective validity carries with it.

NOTE ON THE 'TIMELESS SELF'

So much prominence has been given to the doctrine of the 'timeless self' in the writings of Green and his disciples that it seems hardly possible to pass over the matter altogether, though a full discussion of it does not enter into the plan of this work. The doctrine seems to me to be mainly traceable to the following misconceptions and confusions:

(1) The necessity, for knowledge, of a permanent self, persisting through change, is often treated as proving what is quite a different thing – a self which is out of time altogether.

(2) The doctrine is founded upon the fact that for two events, past and present, to enter into and become the basis of knowledge, they must be compared together, and to be compared they must both in a sense be 'present' to the mind which compares them. But this presence is a presence *in idea*: to make the reality of a *past* event consist in its presence to my mind *now* would involve a worse extravagance than can be attributed to any sort of 'subjective Idealism' that has ever been explicitly maintained. It is no doubt real as an 'idea in my head,' and considered as an 'idea in my head' it has its own time, the present, which is different from the time in which the event which I think really occurred. There is, no doubt, in the judgement a reference to reality – to the real event, but the real event is not my judgement about it or any present experience of mine. From this point of view the doctrine represents a monstrous distortion of the ultimate fact that a being who is now in one time can know events which were in another time. This may or may not be difficult or unintelligible or mysterious, but it is not made more intelligible by using language which plainly distorts the facts. I did not exist in the eighteenth century because I can know events which occurred at that period, nor am I now in the nineteenth century because some of my personal experience occurred in that century.

(3) Another way in which the idea of a 'timeless self' seems to be arrived at is by a mistaken inference from the discovery that the relations

between facts are themselves not in time at all. The fact that A occurred after B is not a fact which can be said to be in A's time or B's time or in both together. The relation of posteriority is out of time altogether. But then it is forgotten that this relation of A to B taken apart from A and B themselves is not a reality at all but a mere abstraction. Considered as knowledge it is of course out of time, but all knowledge implies abstraction. Knowledge is not real apart from the thing known on the one hand or the knowing mind on the other. Abstract knowledge is out of time, just because we have made abstraction both of the time in which the knower is and of the time in which the events known occurred, and think of the knowledge apart in abstraction from its presence to any particular knower. 'The system of relations,' the interconnected judgements which make up Science are no doubt out of time when, and in so far as, we make abstraction both of the knower and of the events related. But the abstract system of relations, when taken apart from the events related, is not the actual events, and the events related are in time. This confusion leads up to that view of the Universe which identifies the real world with a 'system of relations,' supposed to be real without anything to relate, with a world timeless, changeless, static, existing for thought only and consisting of nothing but thought—according to some, of thought without even a thinker. Such a mode of thinking seems to culminate in the doctrine that the Universe is nothing but a 'continuous judgement.'

(4) The system of categories which the self, in Kantian language, imposes upon the data of sense, and which are supposed to be derived from the Ego, has been confused—not by Kant but by Green and others—with the self by which these categories are, in the Kantian system, imposed upon the matter of our knowledge. This system of categories, abstracted from the matter which is known by means of them and from the concrete thought in which they are manifested, is no doubt out of relation to time: but then this system of thought-relations is still less capable of identification with Reality than the concrete judgements in which those categories are used. The real self certainly knows abstract *truths* which are abstractions and therefore out of time, and events which are in other times; but it is itself born at a certain time and may (so far as actual experience goes) be out of existence at another, while every moment of its thought or volition is in some time or other.

(5) If it be said that the 'self' which is present in knowledge is not the individual but the universal self, I should reply (*a*) that God cannot, any more than the individual self, be identified with a system of abstract categories, and (*b*) that the self with which we are concerned in Morality must be the individual, and not the universal, self-consciousness. The fact that God is 'out of time,' if it be a fact, cannot be used as an argument against considering pleasure as any part of human good on the ground that it cannot satisfy a 'timeless self.' The self which desires and wills and is satisfied in Morality is assuredly the individual self, and that is a self which has a beginning and which might (so far as any merely metaphysical consideration goes) be supposed to have an end.

The question whether in any sense God is 'out of time' or 'above time' is a far more difficult problem. And, as it is not a matter of any directly ethical import, I do not intend to discuss it here at length. Here we have, it must be confessed, a real difficulty to face – the 'antinomy' involved in the impossibility either of thinking of a first event, a beginning of the world's history, or of supposing an endless succession of events. But this 'antinomy' is not really solved by talking about the whole series being simultaneously or extra-temporally present to a timeless consciousness: for, even if God contemplates the whole series at once, He must contemplate that series as having a beginning and an end or as endless: and we cannot understand how either is possible. The antinomy remains unsolved. The existence of the antinomy does constitute a good ground for saying that we do not fully understand the nature of time, and that God's relation to time must be different from our relation to it. But it does not justify us in talking about God being 'timeless' or 'out of time' as though we really knew what such phrases meant, and could ourselves attain to this extra-temporal view of things; or in talking about time-distinctions as merely 'subjective,' as though the events of the world's history had their real being out of time but only appeared to us to be in time because of the imperfection of our knowledge—as though all difference between past and future were merely apparent, as though the idea that human acts really effect any change in the Universe were a simple delusion, as though the reality of the world were something static and unchangeable, and the like.

All these positions seem to me to involve at bottom (1) a confusion between knowledge and reality, and (2) the idea that the individual self is timeless. From no possible point of view can human experience appear to be out of time, except a point of view which does not look at things as they really are. If we admit that the individual self is not timeless, I can attach no meaning to a point of view from which the experiences of beings in time—whose experience comes to them in time—shall be seen to be really timeless. Any point of view from which God may in any sense be said to transcend time must at least be a point of view which admits of the possibility of his knowing the experience which is in time and of knowing it as in time—that is to say, as it really is, and not as something which it is not. If God supposed that the pain which I suffered in the past really exists in the present or eternally or out of time, He would be thinking of things as they are not.

It is impossible to discuss the question of the relation of God or the Absolute to time more fully, and I am far from thinking that it is one which can be disposed of in a few sentences. To discuss the question at all adequately would involve a whole Metaphysic: all Metaphysical questions are, indeed, apt to run up into this supreme difficulty. It is not necessary here to do more than to justify my refusal to admit the validity of any arguments or theories about Ethics or otherwise which assume that time is 'subjective.' There is, as I have said, no direct connexion between this question and any ethical problem, but

indirectly the connexion is considerable. Theories of the merely subjective, apparent, delusive character of time and all that is in time underlie, or have a strong tendency to associate themselves with, the ethical scepticism which declines to recognize the objective validity of our ethical judgements, or to admit that the ethical point of view (admittedly implying the temporal point of view) contains any trustworthy revelation of the ultimate nature and meaning of the Universe. Such theories I have to some extent examined in other chapters, especially Book II, chap. iii, and Book III, chap. ii.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND MORALITY

I

In the last chapter I tried to explain the sense and degree in which a sound system of Ethics presupposes certain metaphysical beliefs. It may be well briefly to recapitulate the results. (1) We saw that certain beliefs about the self may be described as postulates of Ethics in the first degree,—that is to say, in the sense that no real meaning whatever can be given to Morality without assuming the truth of those beliefs, though they may not be explicit in every individual consciousness. (2) The belief in God was found to be essential to the logical justification of that idea of objective validity which is implicit in the moral consciousness, at least in the higher stages of its development. The idea of God may, no doubt, in particular persons of strong moral convictions not only not be explicit, but may be formally denied. The tendency, however, of its denial [1] is and must be in the long run (since all men are in some degree rational beings with a desire for rational self-consistency) to weaken or destroy belief in objective Morality and so the influence of all higher Morality in the world. (3) The idea of a future life seemed an equally essential implication of Morality for those who find it impossible without it to reconcile the facts of life with such a conception of God and of the world as is essential for the rational interpretation of the moral consciousness.

It is not pretended that these metaphysical implications of Morality have always been apparent either to systematic thinkers or to all those in whom moral ideas have been operative. To

[1] In strictness we should say the denial of God's existence or of some other form of the belief in a rational Universe, such as is involved (however imperfectly and inadequately) in Buddhism. Reasons have been given for regarding the theistic view as the only one which fully and adequately satisfies the implications of an objective Morality.

many individuals these truths, presented in an abstract metaphysical form, have been no more apparent than any other metaphysical truths which are nevertheless no less really implicit in the ordinary thought of ordinary persons. Nevertheless the history of practical Ethics tends to support the belief that there is a real connexion between certain principles of action, and certain metaphysical verities. The way in which metaphysical truths have been held by and have impressed the great mass of men is in the form of what we call Religion. Religion represents an element in the life of all nations which have risen above a very low stage of savagery[1], and the Morality of a people has always been very closely connected with its Religion, though the closeness of the connexion has varied at different stages of moral and religious development. This Religion has not always been Religion of the kind which we have attempted to represent as the logical presupposition of a sound Morality, any more than the Morality connected with it has always been the Morality of civilized man. We are not concerned here with the historical aspect of the connexion between the lower forms of Morality and the lower forms of Religion. But the nature of the connexion between developed Morality and developed Religion is of such great importance, both theoretical and practical, that it will be well to devote a separate chapter to its consideration.

I shall not in this chapter ask what is the ethical value of religious systems other than those which recognize the three fundamental principles which we have already seen reason for regarding as logical postulates of Ethics—belief in God who wills the highest good and in the Immortality of the soul or at least of such souls as are worthy of Immortality. In the present chapter I propose to ask how far such beliefs are practically necessary or useful to Morality, and in what relation Religion and Morality ought to stand to one another in the ideal human life.

[1] Probably even this exception need not be made. Where travellers or Anthropologists have attempted to point out the existence of a people without Religion, the attempt is generally based either upon insufficient information or upon a too narrow conception of what Religion is.

The first of these questions is of course to some extent distinct from the question on which we have been engaged. Religious belief might possess an important and beneficial moral influence without being in any sense speculatively necessary to a complete and self-consistent ethical creed: or again theistic belief might be speculatively necessary, although the absence of it might have no important practical influence upon those who are content to do without speculative justification for their practical beliefs. But though distinct, the two questions are not unconnected. For no absolute line can be drawn between speculative or scientific Metaphysics and popular Theology. Popular religious beliefs, positive or negative, represent an implicit Metaphysic, though often no doubt, for their adherents, resting partly upon grounds which could not in the ordinary sense of the word be described as metaphysical. Metaphysic represents the reflective and articulate form of beliefs which may quite well be held in a more or less chaotic, a more or less unreflective, way by unmetaphysical and even uneducated persons. All Religion is, always has been, and always must be essentially metaphysical. The crudest savage 'Animism' is a metaphysical theory as much as the most esoteric Brahminism or the most cultured modern Theology. The modern Theologians of the Ritschlian type, who declaim against Metaphysics and propose to reduce Theology to a belief in the Fatherhood of God, are Metaphysicians as much as the most elaborately technical Schoolman or the most speculative Hegelian. The belief in the Fatherhood of God is none the less a metaphysical belief, because it may be shared both by unlearned men who are entirely without metaphysical training and by learned men who are not good Metaphysicians. Metaphysic after all has no data but the facts of outer and inner experience, and no instrument but human Reason; and all men have some experience, and use their Reason to a greater or less extent in interpreting that experience. The beliefs of those who think for themselves gradually spread, and influence those who think little or not at all. This is particularly the case with the Metaphysic which deals with the facts of the moral consciousness, and with matters in which the moral consciousness has an especial interest. And the practical influence of religious belief

or its absence upon Morality is due, as I believe, in a large measure to an instinctive consciousness of its necessity as the presupposition of that objective validity in ethical judgements on which I have already dwelt. The 'plain man' finds it difficult or impossible to believe in Morality as anything more than the actual opinion of his neighbours about his conduct, unless he can believe that it is the law of the Universe; and this belief is for him, at least, and I have tried to show that in the main he is right, possible only in the form of a belief that Morality is the will of God: and, if God is just, He must (so he will argue) reward the good and punish the bad. So the plain man argues; and any weakening of this conviction is apt to react upon the intensity, if not upon the detailed content of his ethical creed. Reflection may bring him hereafter to a more refined view of what is crudely represented as 'reward' and punishment'; but the heart of his belief is right, and may be expressed more exactly in the form that the Universe is directed towards the working out of an ideal end for individual souls.

II

But here, perhaps, exception may be taken to my seeming to identify Religion with Monotheism, and even with a Monotheism which carries with it the belief in personal Immortality. I have already disclaimed the attempt to give any historical account of the relation between Religion and Morality, which is in many respects a very different relation at different stages of human culture. Historically, of course, the origin of Religion may be said to be almost independent of Morality, except in so far as all primitive Religion was closely connected with that family and tribal sentiment which was the earliest form of Morality. In primitive times Religion and Morality represented two streams of human thought and feeling which were indeed to a large extent parallel and independent, but which were never without frequent points of contact and interaction. Elements in primitive Religion were quite unconnected with Morality; elements in it were contrary to Morality, or at least contrary to what would have been regarded as moral but for the influence of those religious ideas. Still more emphatically elements or aspects of

Morality have at certain periods of History had nothing or very little to do with Religion. This has been the case especially at certain times and places where the ethical development has temporarily gone beyond the religious development.

We are apt to underestimate the closeness of the habitual relations between Morality and Religion through our familiarity with just those periods of ancient civilization in which for a very small class the ethical development was most conspicuously in advance of the religious[1]. But, even for the average pagan outside the small cultivated class, religious duties (in so far as they were recognized as duties) were also moral duties, although the act prescribed might be an act which at other times and places might be regarded as immoral, and necessarily affected (for good or for evil) his general ideas about Morality. Some moral duties at least were at all times specially connected with, and encouraged by, Religion, even when the highest ideals of the community had little connexion with and exercised little influence over its religious ideas except by undermining them. And on the whole the tendency of progress—both moral and religious—has been to bring Religion and Morality ever more and more closely together, until in the 'ethical religions' there is professedly a complete coincidence between the requirements of Religion and those of Morality; though only in the more spiritual forms of these—completely perhaps only in the purest forms of Christianity—is this coincidence fully, systematically, and consciously realized. These higher Religions may all be fairly described as monotheistic with one exception; and they all teach a future life of the soul. Buddhism in its pure and original form was certainly not theistic; though it probably tends to become so in the popular consciousness[2]. But Buddhism is certainly not an instance of

[1] How small this section was we are reminded by Mark Pattison: 'We are apt to speak as if in the Roman world of the first century A.D., pagan worships had died, or were dying out. This is an illusion generated by literature' (*Sermons*, p. 151). Another 'illusion generated by Literature' has restricted our conception of Religion in the ancient world too much to the official State worship; it takes too little account of the more popular and the more ethically influential cults such as Orphism and Mithraism.

[2] So difficult is the experiment of a non-theistic Religion that Buddhism has had practically to deify its atheistic Founder. An exception ought

a Religion which is independent of metaphysical belief, nor yet of a Religion without the idea of a future life, and its belief about that life is no doubt one great source of the beneficent moral influence which it has exercised. It is true that in its orthodox form Buddhism regards the extinction of consciousness as the ultimate goal of human aspiration; but even this implies the conception of a future good which depends upon present conduct, though that good is conceived of as a negative good or escape from evil. And for the great mass of Buddhists many lives intervene between the present and the soul's final goal: while the best authorities seem to doubt whether even Nirvana has ever really been regarded, except by a few thinkers in their most speculative moments, as an actual extinction of consciousness. The ethical influence of this non-theistic Religion is undoubted, but it may quite well be contended that its negative Theology is largely responsible for its ethical defects. The comparative history of the two Religions—Christianity and Buddhism—would seem to confirm the suspicion that the ethical results of a Religion which makes death its highest ideal must be inferior on the whole to those of a Religion which finds the end of man in a more abundant and satisfying life.

Comparison of particular Religions is, however, quite beside my present purpose. I am concerned here only with estimating the ethical value and importance of Religion in what I regard as its highest form, the only form (as I believe) in which Religion is fully in harmony with a sound reflective Metaphysic, and at all events the only form in which its influence is practically felt in civilized Western societies. I have added these remarks on account of the wild language in which an eminent thinker has indulged about the unhistorical mistake of those who assume that there can be no Religion without a personal God or personal Immortality. I have not overlooked the possibility of a Religion without either a God or a future life: but it remains a question what would be the ethical results of such a Religion. There

perhaps also to be made of the old Persian Religion, inasmuch as its admission of an independent principle or power of evil is inconsistent with Monotheism: but even there the good Spirit is thought of as more powerful than the evil.

may undoubtedly be such a thing as Religion which is positively unfavourable to the moral life. I am not sure that the Religion which Mr. Bradley has sketched for us is not of that character. The worship of an Absolute which is conceived of as non-moral could hardly be of much positive ethical value. The worship of an Absolute who has a moral character and that the moral character which Mr. Bradley (if he is to be taken seriously[1]) in his more anti-orthodox moods attributes to the object of his esoteric cult might well lead to ethical results not unlike those associated with the worship of the less respectable deities in the pagan Pantheon. Fortunately the experiment of such a Religion has never been tried on any large scale at an advanced stage of civilization.

III

What then are the ethical advantages of Theism? To deal with the subject adequately would really involve an examination of Religion itself, not only in the form of an abstract Philosophy but in its historical manifestations, and particularly in the form which even those who do not regard it as in any sense final will for the most part admit to be the highest which has hitherto exercised any widespread influence on mankind. The following remarks must be regarded as the merest indication of the main heads under which the very manifold and far-reaching influences of Religion upon Morality may be grouped—the main grounds on which I reject the tendency to regard an ethical creed as a satisfactory substitute for a theological creed based upon Morality.

First, however, let me repeat what I have already more than once insisted on, I trust with some emphasis—that the moral consciousness itself contains no explicit or immediate reference to any theological belief whatever. A man's consciousness of

[1] Recent utterances of his, e.g. in an article on 'Truth and Practice' in *Mind*, N. S., Vol. XIII, No. 51 (1904), seem to suggest that the mood in question is passing away. At all events I find it quite impossible to reconcile the reverent and theistic spirit of those remarks with such a suggestion as that which he makes in *Appearance and Reality*, Ed. ii. p. 194, that human error is justified in the world-plan because of the contribution which it makes to the amusement of the Absolute.

value, and in particular of the supreme value residing in the good will, does not necessarily include, as a matter of simple psychological fact, any recognition of duty as the will of God, or any expectation of happiness or misery in another life as the consequence of duty performed or neglected. Nor can the consciousness of duty be regarded as in any sense a logical deduction or inference from such beliefs. These beliefs logically presuppose the moral consciousness. It is for the rational interpretation of the moral consciousness that metaphysical or theological beliefs are required; just as they are required for the rational interpretation of Science, though eminent men of Science may be innocent of all conscious metaphysical theory or indulge in metaphysical speculations really fatal to their own Sciences. Where no such interpretation presents itself as reasonable or where it is deliberately rejected, the good man in proportion to his goodness will still no doubt aim at that which seems to him the highest; and no difficulty which he may experience in metaphysically interpreting his conduct will lead to the cessation of his efforts—if only he is good enough and strong enough. In proportion to his goodness and his strength he will cling to his ethical ideal. The absence or rejection of metaphysical justification seems, however, to have a tendency varying in strength according to circumstances and temperament, a tendency which shows itself in the spiritual life of communities even where it does not immediately tell upon the spiritual life of individuals, to weaken the hold of the belief in Morality itself upon life and conduct. It does not necessarily involve a direct, conscious, immediate alteration of ethical creed. In the majority of cases a man who has given up every form of theological belief will continue to say 'I believe in Morality'; and if you ask him what Morality means he will possibly give much the same account of it as he did before his rejection of the theological belief. He does not, except perhaps as regards certain particular points of Morality which for him may have been specially connected with some organ of religious Authority, reject anything that he believed before: he does not consciously and deliberately make up his mind to aim no more at what he aimed at formerly, or to drown scruples which he once

respected. But the intellectual hold of Morality upon his mind is weakened when he can give no account of it except that it is a way of thinking that Evolution has somehow produced in creatures of his species. It ceases to occupy the place that it did in his habitual thoughts about the Universe and his own place in it. For the only form in which the majority of men can grasp tenaciously the idea of an objective Moral Law is by regarding it as the will of a spiritual Being to whom they feel themselves responsible[1]. Even among highly-educated persons it is doubtful whether many find it possible to realize the belief in an abstract Morality, and to make the aspiration after it the dominant aim of their lives with as much intensity as the best of those who have believed in a living God. For after all rationality exercises some influence over human conduct; and a belief which the holder of it is forced to regard as irrational or non-rational will exercise in the long run, in proportion as its non-rational character is realized, less influence on a man's conduct than one which justifies itself to his Reason as well as to his emotions. Nor can it well be denied that most of those who reject the idea of God do advisedly and deliberately reject also as a matter of speculative belief the idea of an absolute or intrinsic moral obligation, though some of them may more or less successfully endeavour to prevent that rejection from having any practical effect upon their conduct. But in the long run speculation does affect conduct. To state the practical connexion between Re-

[1] At least this may be said of Western men. If it does not hold of Buddhists, it must be remembered that the Buddhist very distinctly regards the Universe as morally controlled, though by an impersonal law. I should fully admit that such a creed as that of Dr. McTaggart—the belief in Immortality without a belief in God—does supply a metaphysical justification for Morality. Whether it does this so well as Theism, whether the creed is intrinsically as reasonable as Theism, and whether its influence over life and conduct is likely to be as powerful, these are questions which I cannot here explicitly discuss. It seems hardly necessary for a Theist who thinks a belief in Immortality with Theism more reasonable than a belief in Immortality without it to attempt to decide exactly how much of the ethical influence arising from belief in God and Immortality could be secured by belief in Immortality and a morally governed Universe without God. The reader will see that some of the considerations urged in this chapter could be equally urged from Dr. McTaggart's point of view, while others could not.

ligion and Morality at its lowest, the belief in a personal God represents the form of belief about the Universe in which the intellectual hold of Morality upon the human mind tends to attain its maximum intensity. And the firmer or weaker intellectual grasp of a belief reacts upon its emotional influence.

Theism of the Christian type is the creed which secures the maximum emotional hold of human Morality upon the mind. Action motived by no other desire than the desire to fulfil the Moral Law for its own sake, accompanied by no emotion but what is produced by the direct consciousness of duty, is undoubtedly not impossible. But such a desire is not commonly the sole or (unless reinforced by other feelings or emotions) the habitually dominant motive of action even in the best men. Morality seldom excites the strongest emotion till it is embodied in a self-conscious Being. Personal influence is the strongest of all moral motive powers. And yet there is clearly no kind of personal affection or social emotion except the fear or love of God which can be trusted to range itself invariably on the side of the Moral Law. It is not easy to exaggerate the increase of emotional intensity which the Moral Law acquires when the reverence for it fuses inextricably with a feeling of reverence for a Person who is conceived of as essentially and perfectly good. And this reverence is almost independent of the hope of reward or fear of punishment, except in so far as a belief in the divine Justice is necessary to the individual's conception of God as a Person worthy of reverence. This is a consideration often forgotten when advocates of a purely 'ethical Religion' expatiate on the additional purity which a non-theistic creed gives to moral aspiration. It is forgotten that the love of God means simply love for a Person who is the highest good and the source of all other goodness.

There is, indeed, one sort of emotion and only one which can be compared in its intensity and its moral efficacy with religious emotion—and that is Patriotism and other forms of social feeling[1]. John Stuart Mill has declared that, though he enter-

[1] Historically Patriotism, when it has practically acted as a moral motive power of great intensity, has usually been associated with some form of religious belief in the moral sense of the word. That is so even with the

tains 'the strongest objections to the system of politics and morals set forth' in Comte's *Système de Politique Positive*, that treatise 'has superabundantly shown the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the aid of belief in a Providence, both the physical power and the social efficacy of a religion[1].' I do not doubt that the love of country or of Humanity is capable of producing in particular natures—even in whole nations—moral results comparable in strength with those which spring from the fear or the love of God. But it must not be forgotten that this social enthusiasm is extremely difficult to cultivate, and that when cultivated it is not always a security for a sound Morality. For the effect of good conduct on social Well-being is often very remote and indirect: affection for individuals or for small groups of men—even for the whole present generation—may inspire conduct which is really anti-social. The strongest temptation to most men lies in the disposition to conform to the moral standard, and to win the applause, of their immediate environment. Moreover, even the philanthropy which is really inspired by a love of Humanity at large may be divorced from the love of moral goodness. What we desire for others may be mere pleasure or contentment, not the highest sort of life. Against these dangers there is no more valuable counteractive than the faith which identifies Morality with the love of a God who wills exclusively the true and highest good of all his creatures. The love of God is at once a stimulant, a complement, and a corrective to the love of man. The true love of Humanity is the love of Humanity at its highest—'the love not of all men nor yet of every man, but of *the man* in every man[2].' And love of the ideal man becomes

modern Japanese. Vague as the creed of the average Japanese appears to be, it does eminently tend to produce the conviction that Morality is the law of the Universe, and not simply the public opinion of a particular community. Both Buddhism and Shintoism, in the form in which they are popularly accepted, conduce to that result by producing belief in the future of the soul after death, and in a communion with still living ancestors. The pessimistic, ascetic, and anti-social side of Buddhism appears to have exercised little influence on the Japanese mind.

[1] *Utilitarianism*, p. 49.

[2] Seeley, *Ecce Homo*, ed. xiii, chap. xiii, p. 145.

a stronger force the more the ideal end for man is identified with the end of the Universe. In the Christian or the Theist the love of the ideal man is the love of man as God wills him to be.

IV

The belief in a future life I regard as of the highest value both as a postulate or a corollary of belief in God, and for its own sake. The idea of such a life is simply caricatured when it is spoken of as a mere belief in the distribution of posthumous 'rewards and punishments.' Even in this aspect its educational influence is not to be despised. Theists need not be ashamed to acknowledge that they do regard it as a gain to Morality that that 'education by pleasure and pain' which thinkers like Plato and Aristotle regarded as the function of the State should be continued in another life; and that men should act habitually with the thought before them of a future in which the principle of 'reaping what they have sown'—to some very imperfect extent the law even of life here—shall be far more fully and adequately realized. It is true that conduct motived *wholly* by fear of punishment or hope of reward has little or no moral value[1], so long at least as the reward and punishment are conceived of in a purely hedonistic sense; and that the ideal is not reached till this motive is supplanted by or merged in other and higher motives. But we do not despise such influences in ordinary moral education. What parent or schoolmaster would say to a young child, 'My good child, enlightened Philosophers are agreed that conduct motived by fear of punishment or hope of reward is worthless; therefore henceforth I shall leave you to be guided by your own innate sense of right and wrong. I will not corrupt the purity of your will by threats or promises. Your virtues shall be their own reward; your misdeeds shall never interfere with your pleasures or cause the withdrawal of my favour'? What child would flourish morally under such treatment as this? And yet it would be a very cynical view of human nature to suppose that the average schoolboy is actuated

[1] And yet after all Prudence does represent a higher motive than mere animal impulse.

by no motive higher than selfish hope or fear. He has higher motives, but he requires to be aided in his efforts at self-conquest by lower ones. And after all most of us are a great deal more like children than it is fashionable among Philosophers to believe—at least in our moments of weakness and strong temptation. How many people could honestly assert that the promptings of their internal Conscience require or derive no support and assistance from the 'external Conscience'—their fear of social disapproval or the disapproval of those whom they most respect? How many of us will pretend that it would be morally good for them to have all such restraints suddenly withdrawn? And yet, as we have seen, the 'external Conscience' does not always echo the promptings of the inner Conscience. It is just at such times that the external conscience which is supplied by a belief in a God who rewards and punishes becomes most valuable. Plenty of non-religious Moralists will admit that it is wrong to fight a duel: it may be doubted whether a duel has ever been declined upon conscientious grounds, where the social sanction insists on its being fought, except by religious men.

We do not hesitate to appeal even to the coarser physical pains and pleasures in moral education just so far as this may be required. If a man does not see that drunkenness is disgusting, we do not think it degrading to point out to him its physical ill-effects—still less its ultimate tendency to weaken his will and paralyse every energy that he possesses. It is difficult to see how moral education can be conducted in any other way than by associating pleasure and pain with the right objects, and gradually appealing to more and more remote and refined pleasures and pains—pleasures and pains more and more intrinsically connected with the good or bad conduct itself; while at the same time, as moralization advances, we more and more allow the highest motives—the respect for duty and regard for others—to take their place or to transform all lower motives. Moral 'Autonomy' is no doubt the ideal, but it is only at a very advanced stage of moral and intellectual growth that pure Autonomy is attainable. At the lower levels of moral education, there is no objection to insisting on the mere reward and punishment aspect of the future life, so long as these are never represented as constituting the true

ground for moral conduct. But even at this stage the value of this idea of a future 'judgement' consists even more in its tendency simply to emphasize the reality of moral obligation, the idea of an objective Moral Law and of personal responsibility, than in the actual influence which the terror of personal ill-consequences exerts over the mind [1]. And, as moral education advances, it will first sink into the background or be evoked only as an aid to resist the force of violent temptations, and then with the highest souls be altogether superseded by a love of God and man of that perfected kind which is said to 'cast out fear.' In its highest form a Morality based on the idea of God is only a personal, and therefore a far more practically influential, form of 'ethical Autonomy.'

In the higher religious life the anticipation of future rewards and punishments passes into the expectation of a better life in which greater perfection of character and greater opportunities of exercising our highest capacities than are attainable in the present stage of existence shall be combined with all the other elements that constitute our highest conception of the good. Belief in another life enhances the value of the life that now is and the importance of the moral struggle of which it is the scene. The conviction that a man's present conduct will influence his future is the very beginning of all Morality: the larger that future, the more influence does that conviction exercise upon conduct. Moreover, it is not only in regard to ourselves but in regard to others that the vision of eternal consequences emphasizes the importance of every act of moral choice. The promotion of human pleasure and the prevention of human misery would not be ignoble things to aim at, even though the days of man were but threescore years and ten; nor is the value of the higher spiritual life wholly dependent upon its duration.

[1] I suspect that, when the fear of Hell plays a prominent part in the more ardent and emotional kind of religious conversion, it does so mainly by breaking down the apathy and the slavery to immediate sensation which has hitherto prevented moral reflection. It awakens reflection: after that, it is rather the sense of the justice of the punishment depicted by authority or imagination than the actual fear of it, which effects the moral regeneration, though the one idea may often be psychologically inseparable from the other.

But it does seem to me the mere obstinacy of philosophical dogmatism to minimize the influence which is likely to flow from the thought of endless consequences not merely for Society at large but for our own individual souls and the soul of each individual whose character is affected by our acts. Is not that reflection eminently calculated to strengthen our sense of the importance of the moral life? And is not the thought that after all in a few years' time it will not matter a straw to myself or to any one else now living whether I have struggled against temptation or yielded to it, a thought eminently calculated to depress the moral energies, and to reinforce every passion or inclination which may suggest that it is our wisdom to live only for the passing hour? 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' was not indeed a necessary or logical deduction from the denial of Immortality, but it is undoubtedly the inference which the natural man is very apt to draw from it.

It is not, be it remembered, the absolute importance of the moral struggle and the spiritual life for ourselves and others so much as its relative importance when compared with all lower enjoyments and interests which may stand in its way that is so enormously enhanced by the conviction that character lasts beyond the grave. In persons not of a highly imaginative or emotional temperament it is perhaps more in this way than in any personal sense of craving either for future happiness or future perfection that the need for a belief in Immortality is most powerfully felt. They quite recognize that their efforts to be useful ought not to be diminished by any loss of faith in Immortality, and yet the feeling of the poverty and unsatisfactoriness of human life, as it is for the great mass of men, will tend to make their philanthropy unhopeful and uncheerful; and still more probably it will tend to lower their ideal of the good which they desire for their fellows. To the non-believer in Immortality the lower goods will seem a more attainable and a more solid aim than that effort to improve character which often produces so little immediate fruit. And after all it is not wholly a question of 'seeming.' For the superiority of the higher goods to the lower does in part depend upon their duration. The superior duration of the higher goods is one of the most familiar

topics of the least theological Moralists. In particular when the possibilities of life are narrowing in, a man's estimate of the superior value of higher goods is likely to be vitally affected by his Eschatology. The belief in Immortality ought not to revolutionize our estimate of moral values, but it may rationally enough be held in some cases to alter to an appreciable degree our *comparative* estimate of values. When the hope of Immortality is treated as irrational, it is hard to believe that men will think it worth while to spend time and labour upon the improvement of character in themselves or others at an age when their work in life is done, and when their powers of social influence on other lives may be treated as a negligible quantity. I have already dwelt upon the influence which a thoroughly realized belief in human mortality would be likely to exert, and perhaps ought to exert, upon the general estimate of Suicide and some departments of Ethics connected therewith[1]. There is no need to repeat this here.

There is yet another way in which Morality seems to crave, if it does not logically demand, the belief in Immortality, or rather one other way of re-stating the connexion which we have already been studying. On the supposition of universal mortality the contrast between the capacities of human nature and its actual destiny, between the immensity of the man's outlook and the limitations of his actual horizon, between the splendour of his ideals and the insignificance of his attainment, becomes such as to constitute, in a mind which fairly faces it, a shock to our rational nature sufficient to destroy belief in the rationality of things, and to imperil confidence in the authority of Moral Reason as a guide to human life. To those who have once accepted the rationality of things, and most emphatically to those who have once accepted the faith in a personal God, the improbability that a being of such capacity should have been created to be simply the creature of a day, that 'cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower, and never continueth in one stay,' has almost invariably amounted to an absolute impossibility. It is the favourite argument alike of reasoned Philosophy and of the intensest moral intuition. It is the argument implicit in

[1] See Vol. I, p. 209.

the intuition of Jesus Christ, that beings once admitted to spiritual communion with the Eternal Father, like the traditional fathers of the Jewish race, could not be doomed to extinction after so brief and so imperfect a vision of Him. 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.' Plato and Cicero are full of the same thought. It is the argument drily and somewhat abstractly expressed by Kant when he made it a postulate of the Moral Law that its commands should be capable of fulfilment, and argued that, as in this life only distant approaches to the true ideal are possible to the best, there must be a hereafter in which a progressively closer approximation to it should be possible. It is at bottom the basis of that faith in Immortality which, in greater or less intensity, is to be found in nearly all modern thinkers in whom ethical convictions have been profound and paramount [1].

And, be it observed, it is not among those whose ideas of Morality are such as to demand a 'Trinkgeld' for Virtue, but precisely among those whose sense of the intrinsic worth of goodness is strongest, and whose appreciation of the higher side of the present life is keenest, that we find the most passionate conviction that this cannot be all. If this conviction, this necessary inference from the existence of the Moral Law, should be shown to be false, it would tend to throw doubt upon the validity of all their higher thought, upon the worth of all higher ideals, even upon the validity of the moral judgement itself. It can hardly be doubted that psychologically it would have this effect. And, if there be any validity in the argument of the last chapter, that effect would only be the psychological expression of legitimate metaphysical considerations. It is not only the 'sense of obligation' that would disappear, but also the reality of it, that is to say the objectivity which at bottom is the ultimate meaning of moral obligation [2].

[1] The natural tendency of such minds, when the drift of their thought takes them away from the belief in God and Immortality, is towards Pessimism. I should certainly include Von Hartmann among the thinkers in whom ethical considerations have been profound and paramount.

[2] Or, at least, the basis of it. In popular thought the idea of 'moral obligation' usually includes not merely the belief in an objective mind or law but the belief that the Universe is ultimately governed in accordance with that law.

Belief in a future life is, I hold, an essential element of Religion in any form which is likely to satisfy a modern Western intelligence whose Ethics are not those of Asceticism, and whose conception of the Universe is not pessimistic. But at the same time I should strongly insist that this belief derives its moral value largely from its close connexion with the highest form of the religious emotion—the love of God. For God to be loved He must be thought of as worthy of love, and it is difficult to believe that He is worthy of love if He wills such a world as ours except as a means to some better one, for those at least of his creatures who are worthy of it. But I would once more emphasize the fact that the religious motive at its highest is the love of God for his own sake, and not merely for any reward that is to be expected from Him, however sublimated be our conception of that reward. In the love of God the two strongest emotional forces which make for Morality in this world find their fullest and most harmonious satisfaction—reverence for the moral ideal and love of Humanity. When God is conceived of as the realization of our highest moral ideals, love of God and love of duty become one and the same thing, with all the additional strength which love of a person can claim over the love of an abstract law. Love of a person includes the desire to promote that person's end: and the end of God, as we have thought of Him, is the highest welfare of his creatures [1]. Devotion to the moral ideal and to the true good of Humanity is, indeed, at bottom identical with the love of God. But it is hardly possible to exaggerate the reinforcement which that devotion receives, both on the rational and the emotional side, when it is identified with the love of a person in whom our highest ideal is realized, and on whose side we are called upon to contend in a real, and not a merely illusory, battle for the realization of that same ideal in others. That the love of God may be implicit in all reverence for the moral ideal and all true love of Humanity, even when the thought of God is not consciously present to the agent's mind, I should be the first to

[1] So far as known to us and so far as it can be promoted by human action. I do not of course deny that this may be in reality but a small part of the ultimate world-end.

assert[1]; but implicit beliefs are generally not so strong as explicit beliefs. Implicit beliefs tend to wither away when they are never made explicit; still more so, when in their explicit form they are scouted and ridiculed. Belief in the moral ideal attains its maximum momentum when it is identified with the love of a Person.

It would involve an artificial and unreal separation between the spheres of natural and of what is popularly known as 'revealed' Religion were I to abstain from pointing out how Christianity satisfies the demand for a personal object of the highest reverence by concentrating it upon an historical human being who is regarded at once as the supreme and typical revelation of the divine Will and character and as the truest type of the human race. Love of God and love of man meet in the love of Christ. The love of Humanity cannot degenerate into an unethical humanitarian sentiment when Humanity is represented by its worthiest type. Love of God cannot degenerate into an otherworldly or anti-social pietism when God is thought of as represented by Humanity at its highest; while, according to the Christian view of Ethics, social enthusiasm receives its highest satisfaction in the pursuit of that ideal of a regenerated human society which Jesus bequeathed to the world, and which has taken outward and visible form in the organized communities of his followers.

V

There are some to whom the view which has been taken of the relation between Religion and Morality will seem to concede too little to Religion and too much to Morality. They will contend that the sphere of Morality and the sphere of Religion are

[1] Von Hartmann points out that just as the love of particular animals (e. g. in children) is often an undeveloped love of man, so the love of man is an undeveloped love of God. '... er in seinem Bruder das Ebenbild oder die Inkarnation Gottes sieht. Die Gottesliebe ist die Wahrheit der Nächstenliebe, wie die Nächstenliebe die Wirklichkeit der Gottesliebe ist' (*Ethische Studien*, p. 207). The writer is here only developing principle implied in Christ's own 'Forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me,' whether we regard these words as the *ipsissima verba* of Christ, or as representing the working of his spirit in the mind of the early Church.

wholly distinct, the sphere of Religion being the higher of the two. The sphere of Morality is that of human action and of human action alone. Morality cannot reasonably be attributed to God. It implies the coexistence of evil and good. It implies that some things happen which ought not to happen; whereas from the religious point of view nothing can happen but that which God wills, and what God wills is what ought to happen. The good and the bad alike contribute, it will be urged, to the fulfilment of the divine Will. It is merely owing to the limitations of human nature that we present some things to ourselves as bad and others as good. Not only must we suppose, therefore, on speculative grounds that the divine Will is 'super-moral,' and that acts and principles of action which to us seem immoral are in God perfectly good, but it is possible to some extent even for the human mind, in a general way, if not in detail, to see that they are good; and by an effort of not irrational faith to trust that they are so even where it cannot point out how and why they are so. The religious consciousness can rise above the abstract and one-sided point of view to which the mere moral consciousness is confined; it can acquiesce, not only with pious resignation but with joy and exultation, in the perfect order which faith reveals; and pronounce that in this world, wherein there are many things which it is wrong to do and much evil which it is a duty to struggle against, there happens nevertheless ultimately nothing which ought not to happen [1].

Now in this contention it is extremely important to distinguish between two possible senses in which such language may be used. It is one thing to maintain that *our* Morality is defective, and inadequately represents the true and final aim of the Universe: it is another thing to maintain that moral distinctions of any and every kind are transcended in the mind of God, and in the soul of the religious man who has managed to think himself or feel himself out of the moral into the super-moral

[1] Indeterminists will of course except what is due to 'free-will'—on any view a very small part of the total evil in the world. This point of view is not usually adopted by Indeterminists, but it is occasionally approximated to by a few Indeterminist Theologians who have picked up a philosophy which does not suit them.

sphere. That our conception of the ethical ideal is a more or less imperfect one will be admitted in some degree by thinkers of every school. The defectiveness of *our* moral notions might be asserted in a very much stronger way than I see any reason for doing without implying that for God there is no Morality [1] or that our moral judgements, not because they are bad and erroneous moral judgements but just because they are, from the ethical point of view, sound and reasonable, are nevertheless from the point of view of the Absolute false or meaningless. To maintain this last position implies the denial of all objectivity to the moral judgement, and reduces all Morality not merely to 'an appearance' but to a false and delusive appearance. It is of the essence of the moral consciousness, as it actually exists, to *claim* universal validity; if it possesses no such validity, it is not merely particular moral judgements that are false and delusive but the whole idea that there is such a thing as an end which absolutely ought to be promoted, and that we have a power (more or less adequate) of determining what that something is.

Now it seems to me that many of those who indulge in the now fashionable talk about a 'super-moral sphere' are not clear in their own minds as to the sense in which they maintain it. Mr. Bradley, for instance, has used much language which could only be justified if he meant to uphold the second and more destructive of the two positions above indicated. But, when he pronounces that, though the Absolute is not moral, he or rather 'it' is nevertheless 'in a sense' good [2], or that, though both goodness and badness 'are good alike, ... they are not good equally [3],' he is as much implying the validity of that category of good from which Morality derives all its meaning as he would be if he made the less startling assertion that human Morality is an imperfect revelation of the divine. When he pronounces that the Universe as a whole is perfectly good, I may dissent from

[1] Of course if by Morality is meant the choice of the good in spite of inclination to the contrary, there is no harm in saying with Kant that God's Will is a 'holy' and not a moral Will. Kant of course was as far as possible from the point of view which I am attacking. He made a 'holy will' the ideal goal even of human character-development, and he never hesitates to speak of God as a moral Being.

[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 412.

[3] Ib., p. 440.

his Optimism; but he is as much assuming the absolute validity of his own moral judgements, and consequently of that category of good which those judgements involve, as I do when I assert that the whole is not perfectly good, though God's Will is for the best possible. When he supposes that the Absolute may enjoy something much better than Morality in willing not merely particular acts (which in God may be means to a greater good) but *ends* at which it would be cruel and malicious for a man to aim, I may dispute his reasons for making such an assumption; but, if the promotion of divine laughter at human ignorance be really better than love, it would follow not that God was not moral but that our judgements in detail were wrong[1]. There would in this view be such a discrepancy between our actual moral judgements and the true ones that the question might well be raised why we should trust them at all. Nay, if a Philosopher like Mr. Bradley is clever enough to find out that the real end of the Universe is something very different from what kindly and merciful men aim at, I fail to see why we should not, under his tuition, aim at co-operating with the aims of the Absolute, and universalize the maxim that heartless practical joking is better than kindliness and mutual goodwill. Mr. Bradley would doubtless reply that he does not seriously pretend to have discovered what the absolute end is: but, if he does not know what it is, why should he assume that it is so fundamentally different from

[1] See ib., p. 194. I am here using more theistic language than Mr. Bradley would himself use, for I can attach no meaning to the terms 'good' and 'bad' as applied to mere things; but, since he admits that the Absolute is *as much* Will as Reason (without actually being either) I do not think I am seriously misrepresenting him or at least one side of his thought. Mr. Bradley's whole doctrine about the Absolute seems to me to represent an impossible compromise or see-saw between a genuine theistic Idealism (which represents, I believe, his real mind), and a Spinozism into which he is led partly, no doubt, by his imagined discovery of fundamental contradictions in all thought (not merely human thought but all thought as such), but probably much more by his anxiety to differentiate his positions as much as possible from that of all Theologians, orthodox or liberal. There are many less unorthodox thinkers who play with Mr. Bradley's doctrine of a super-moral sphere, while professing to believe in a deity who is not (as with Mr. Bradley) an 'it' (though, it would appear, an 'it' which possesses or is consciousness or 'experience') but a spiritual Being to which some of them do not even hesitate to ascribe personality.

that which we think it to be? I have already attempted to show that there are no such fundamental contradictions in our actual moral judgements as to make it inconceivable that they should in principle be a true revelation of the absolute end [1].

But whatever may be thought about Mr. Bradley's reasons for doubting the validity in actual content of our moral judgements, he does not at bottom—in such passages as have been referred to—deny the validity of our moral categories. It is not a super-moral sphere that he has called into existence so much as a sphere in which a different Morality holds good—not a 'non-moral' or 'super-moral' Absolute so much as an Absolute with a truer and higher Morality. He who rejects Mr. Bradley's reasons for assuming this fundamental discrepancy between the divine end and that approved as good by our moral consciousness, and who likes Mr. Bradley's own Morality much better than that which he attributes to his Absolute, has on that Philosopher's own showing a right not merely to call the Absolute good but to regard the Morality of the best men as a revelation of his. By his doctrine that the Absolute is good and cannot be described as bad, he has precluded himself from saying that the words good and evil have no meaning in reference to the Absolute. Morality means aiming at the good; and Mr. Bradley does not deny that the Absolute aims at the good. Even on his own view of our actual, partly self-contradictory, Morality, there seems no reason why he should not admit that Morality has as good a right to be regarded as a revelation of the Absolute as our scientific consciousness [2]; and even the doctrine that both are riddled with contradictions would fail to reveal such a discrepancy between the moral and the religious point of view as he is anxious to discover. Morality would supply us with the

[1] See above, p. 209.

[2] Mr. Bradley goes near to admitting this when he says that 'higher, truer, more beautiful, better and more real—these, on the whole, count in the universe as they count for us. And existence, on the whole, must correspond with our ideas' (ib. p. 550). But why should we be right when we judge that one thing is lower than another, wrong when we judge that a thing is 'bad'—something which ought not to exist at all? And how can an Absolute be perfect which produces something lower instead of something higher, unless he or it is limited in power?

best and truest way of thinking of the Absolute, though the inadequacy of such a view might be greater according to him than Moralists with a less keen eye for 'contradictions' see any reason for admitting[1].

It will be suggested, no doubt, that I am here overlooking that doctrine of degrees of Truth and Reality by which the doctrine of the non-morality of the Absolute is qualified. Mr. Bradley admits that to say that the Absolute is immoral or bad would be more untrue than to say that he is moral or good. The question which suggests itself is, 'how does Mr. Bradley know even that much, if our moral judgements are untrustworthy?' There are no doubt many strong assertions of the goodness of the Absolute side by side with the denial of his or 'its' morality—many strong assertions of the superiority, even from the point of view of the Universe, of goodness over badness. I ask on what Mr. Bradley's handsome testimonial to the goodness or perfection of the Absolute is supposed to rest, when the verdict of our own moral consciousness is discredited? To say that our moral judgements fail to some extent to correspond with moral judgements as they are in the Absolute[2] is one thing; but to say that we can correct their deficiencies is another. And it is the last that Mr. Bradley attempts to do when he pronounces what we call evil to be really good. To admit the probability that our ideals are defective is one thing: to attempt their correction by directly contradicting them is another. To declare that the judgement 'cruelty is bad' must in

[1] When Mr. Bradley in his chapter on 'Ultimate Doubts' (*Appearance and Reality*, chap. xxvii) admits the possibility (though not the probability) of an ultimate element of evil in things, he seems to assume that the evil must be found in the Will which wills the Universe (in so far as Will may be taken as an imperfect and one-sided aspect of the Absolute). It does not seem to occur to him that the evil may be something which, in language as inadequate but no more inadequate than that which he is himself compelled to use, may be described as a lack of Power which may be compatible with a Will for the good—a Will which wills the evil only as a necessary means to the good.

[2] Mr. Bradley, of course, will not admit there are judgements at all in the Absolute. This is too wide a subject to discuss here; but, at all events, he will admit that we cannot think about the Absolute without talking as though there were.

the Absolute be transformed into the judgement 'cruelty to the exact extent to which it actually exists is good,' is not merely to pronounce that our moral judgements are inadequate and are 'somehow' transcended in the Absolute, but dogmatically to say that they are false and that others, which are admitted not to commend themselves to our actual moral consciousness, are true. Any inadequacy, or doubt, or invalidity that may cleave to the former judgement must cleave surely *a fortiori* to the last.

And on what does the supposed intellectual necessity for this reversal of all our canons of value turn? Upon an ideal of our thought. It makes a neater, tidier, more compact and coherent system of the Universe to think of the whole as perfectly good than to think of it as a whole in which, though good predominates, there is some evil. But why should this intellectual ideal of self-consistency or harmony be regarded as a safer guide to the true nature of things than that ideal of Morality which claims in us to be of absolute and objective validity, and so to represent the true end of a rational will? There can be no real 'harmony' or 'perfection,' or 'coherence,' or absence of contradiction, in any picture or ideal or system of the Universe in which our highest ideals of value are flatly contradicted.

The only way in which, as it seems to me, Mr. Bradley could escape the force of these objections would be by absolutely giving up the use of the terms good and evil in thinking of the Absolute, and cancelling all that he has said about the goodness of the Absolute, and, I must add, all that he has said about the intrinsic reasonableness of the Universe; for a reasonable Universe means a Universe which realizes ends that are intrinsically good, and it is only from our judgements of value that we know anything about goodness or indeed about 'ends.' And on one side of his thought Mr. Bradley certainly goes very near to an avowed adoption of this position. When Mr. Bradley pronounces the Absolute good, we naturally suppose him to mean something by the assertion; but eventually, in the last paragraph of his book, he comes near to admitting that he means nothing by it. For there he tells us that 'the Reality is our criterion of worse and better, of ugliness and beauty, of true and false, of real and unreal. It in brief decides between, and gives

a general meaning to, higher and lower[1].' If, then, the real is our sole criterion of worth, if a thing is good in proportion to the amount of real being in it, the assertion that the Absolute is good means no more than the assertion that the Absolute is real. Now for us it is quite certain that the word 'good' does not mean the same as 'real,' unless Mr. Bradley chooses, by definition, to make the word 'real' include our idea of good. If it be said that in the Absolute this difference is to be transcended, at all events our idea of good must be allowed to represent as important an aspect of the Absolute as our idea of real. It must not be simply cancelled, as is done when it is suggested that in or for the Absolute cruelty is good. The idea of good has as much right to be taken into consideration in our speculative construction of the ultimate nature of things as our idea of the real.

I will sum up this necessarily brief and inadequate criticism of Mr. Bradley's position in the form of a dilemma. Either our moral consciousness is a guide to the ultimate nature of Reality or it is not. If it is, some things in the Universe—pain and sin for instance—are bad, and are none the less bad because they may be means to a greater good. If it is not, Mr. Bradley has no right to assert that the Absolute is good, for the idea of good is derived from the moral consciousness and cannot be derived from any other source. To say that our ideas of 'higher' and 'better' 'count in the Universe as they count in us,' and at the same time to speak of the 'good' as meaning merely the 'real,' is (if I may be pardoned for using language which Mr. Bradley has used in another connexion) 'to trifle indecently with a subject which deserves some respect.'

VI

The theory of a super-moral sphere assumes another form in the writings of the great Pessimist, Eduard von Hartmann[2]. And

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 552. This passage seems to involve formal contradiction with the statement that 'that which is highest to us is also in and to the Universe most real' (p. 560). In the first passage we are bidden to interpret goodness by Reality, in the latter Reality by our notions of goodness.

[2] These views are expounded in his best-known work, *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* (trans. by W. C. Coupland, 1893), and in his elaborate

here the collision between the religious and the moral point of view is avowedly far less complete. Von Hartmann recognizes the existence of three spheres or stages in moral development. There is the sphere of mere Nature, the stage below Morality—that of the beasts and, it may be, of purely 'natural man'; the moral stage; and the super-moral. He contends that everything that happens, what we call moral and what we call immoral, is equally tending to the furtherance of an end—the ultimate end of the Universe—, that is (according to him) the extinction of evil and therefore, since consciousness necessarily brings with it more evil than good, the extinction of consciousness [1]. But the great modern Pessimist recognizes also that each of these views of the Universe, if taken by itself, is one-sided and imperfect; that either the first or the third, taken alone, would lead to immoral consequences in practice, and in theory to the negation of all objective moral obligation, in the existence of which there is no more convinced or more convincing believer than Von Hartmann himself [2]. Animals and infants are furthering the true end of the Universe by yielding to their natural instincts and impulses as each comes uppermost—instincts and impulses which are unerringly guided to an end of which they are themselves entirely unconscious. But a moral being would not be promoting the true end of the Universe by so acting; he can only further that end by being moral. It is true that from the third or super-moral point of view it must appear that the bad man's acts are also furthering the ends of the Absolute Will. But Von Hartmann recognizes that to say this

treatise *Das sittliche Bewusstsein*, but the clearest expression of his views as to the relation between Morality and Religion is to be found in his shorter *Ethische Studien*, 1898.

[1] It is, however, according to Von Hartmann, no use to attempt this extinction by individual or even universal Suicide, because the same Absolute which has produced the existing number of men would immediately [why?] produce other individuals to take their place (*Das sittl. Bewusstsein*, p. 476). Would he say that when by celibacy or other checks on population the number is restrained, the Absolute must necessarily create a corresponding number in other parts of the Universe? The contention really reminds one of the old scholastic idea that the number of the saved must exactly equal the number of the fallen Angels.

[2] '... Ethik ohne Objectivität keinen Sinn hat' (*D. sittl. Bewusstsein*, p. 92).

alone would be fatal to the very idea of moral obligation. He is not one of those who think it possible for a rational being to go on acting as a man upon moral principles the vanity of which he has as a Philosopher himself exposed. He recognizes that the end which Morality prescribes to man is not only the true and valid end for man, but part of the true and absolute end of the Universe.[1] When the moral consciousness assures us that Morality is an end-in-itself, that the diminution of human suffering is better than its promotion and the like, the Absolute is not playing a trick upon us, or promoting its ends by a delusion of which all but Philosophers at least are the victims. The Absolute is telling us what is strictly and finally true. But there is a further truth which the moral man, as such, has not discovered—that Morality, though an end-in-itself for man, is also something more. It is also a means to a further end—the supreme end of the Universe.

The immoral man is no doubt also promoting that end. And the religious man recognizes that fact, and acquiesces in the will of the Absolute. But such an admission carries with it no such destructive moral consequences as it does for the Optimist. For, though the general tendency of things is towards the good, it is not true, according to Von Hartmann, that all things are very good. The end which the Absolute is pursuing is only relatively good; it tends towards the minimization of a radical evil, due to the fatal blunder of the Unconscious in giving birth to the world and with it to consciousness. And therefore, though in his way the bad man may possibly be promoting that end, he is never promoting it as much as the good man. Von Hartmann's philosophically enlightened religious man can never be tempted to do evil that good may come. He can never avail himself of the excuse to which no logical Optimist has ever succeeded in giving a satisfactory reply, 'Why should I not sin, when all will be the same in the end, since my sin will in the end contribute to the glory of God or true end of the Universe quite as much as my victory over temptation?'[2] The Hartmannian Pessimist

[1] 'So hat das sittlich Gute seinen Ursprung immer unmittelbar oder mittelbar in der übersittlichen Sphäre' (*Ethische Studien*, p. 23).

[2] It has been urged in reply to this line of thought (*a*) that the fact that

must feel that, if he sins, he really does keep back the true end of the Universe; the true end of the Universe may ultimately be attained, but not so soon, and therefore in a sense not so completely as it would be if he had resisted that temptation instead of yielding to it.

What then, it may be said, does Von Hartmann's doctrine of a super-moral sphere amount to? It seems to involve two positions:

(1) That Morality is a means to a further end beyond itself, and an end in which Morality itself is not included. It is, indeed, relatively an end-in-itself inasmuch as, upon the hypothesis of a radical evil, it is an end-in-itself to minimize it; but the good to which the Absolute is tending can only be attained by the extinction of consciousness, and therefore also of Morality in the sense in which we know it [1].

the sin if it occurs will make the Universe better supplies no reason why it should occur, and (*b*) that to the good man vice is distasteful *per se*, and therefore he will avoid it even though its avoidance will not improve the Universe. I should reply (*a*) that my argument is that, on the optimistic hypothesis, there is no reason against sin *if* a man feels inclined to it, and (*b*) that the second argument really implies that this distastefulness of vice to the good man is a make-weight, so that the world without the wrong act is better than the world with it. According to the hypothesis, this must be a delusion which a rational man will surely seek to get rid of.

[1] It is true that Von Hartmann sometimes seems to treat even the minimization of evil in the present as having no objective value as an end but only as a means to the further ultimate end (e. g. *Ethische Studien*, p. 156). Elsewhere, however, he recognizes that the minimization of human pain and the promotion of human Culture (which between them represent his view of the end for man) are a part of the absolute end (ib. pp. 182, 183). Here and in *Das sittliche Bewusstsein* he seems to oscillate between making Morality an end which it is moral to promote *merely* as a means and making it intrinsically valuable, though also a means to a further end. The statement that 'der Mensch nicht Selbstzweck ist,' but 'nur ein relativer Mittelzweck im universalen teleologischen Organismus der Welt' (*Das sittliche Bewusstsein*, p. 442) seems to me formally inconsistent with the admission that 'Allerdings ist jedes Individuum selbst ein objectiver Partialzweck im Reiche der Zwecke' (p. 461). His difficulties arise in part from features of his system which it is impossible here to criticize in detail. While, in dealing with human Morality, he insists upon 'autonomy' and self-denial to the point of Rigorism, all this suffering is supposed to be imposed upon man merely as a means to the Well-being of the Absolute, whose end is purely 'eudaemonistic' (i. e. hedonistic or selfish).

(2) It involves the denial of Morality to the Absolute, but then Von Hartmann quite consistently refuses to pronounce that the Absolute, or the world in which the Absolute has revealed his unconscious essence, is perfectly good. The present course of things is, indeed, directed towards the best possible, since it is doing its best to get rid of the original evil; and so far there seems no reason why the Unconscious should not be looked upon as perfectly moral or good (as we are expressly told that it is perfectly wise), but then after all the Absolute as Will is itself the cause of that original evil of which as Reason the same Absolute is consistently endeavouring to get rid. Whatever may be thought of this strange cosmogony, which recalls some fantastic gnostic system rather than a sober philosophical thesis, Von Hartmann is not involved in the difficulties of those who believe in a conscious Absolute who is perfectly good, and yet wills things contrary to a Morality which is nevertheless pronounced reasonable.

It is clear that any objection which may be taken to Von Hartmann's position from our point of view turns upon his pessimistic view of the world and not upon his theory of a super-moral Absolute taken by itself. He has what seems to me fundamentally the right conception of the relation between Morality and Religion, though his Religion is not mine. Whether an unconscious Will, which by a strange freak of irration-

If there is any real validity in our moral judgements, how can we escape condemning the Absolute for his selfishness? The only answer which Von Hartmann supplies is (1) that the suffering of the Absolute, if it could not work out its redemption, would be endless, and therefore greatly in excess of those which it imposes upon man as a means to deliverance; and (2) that, in some sense which he wholly fails to explain, the sufferings of the Absolute are also the sufferings of the individual, who is therefore after all only redeeming himself by the sufferings which are (after his own extinction) to work out the redemption of the Absolute. The fundamental difficulty in Von Hartmann seems to be this: either the Happiness of the Absolute is an end in itself or it is not. If it is, so in its measure must be the happiness of men. If human happiness is intrinsically worthless, so must be that of the Absolute. Moreover, if happiness, though part of the end, is not the whole end for men, it can only be part of the end for the Absolute. Von Hartmann can only escape this dilemma by treating as a delusion that objectivity of the moral judgement on which his whole system reposes.

ality in the past created the evil against which that same Unconscious, under the guidance of Unconscious Reason, is in a state of continual strife, can be an object of religious emotion, and whether such an emotion as He or it may be capable of kindling can be a powerful moral lever, we may be allowed to doubt. Whether again a creed which holds that the ultimate end is extinction of consciousness and conscious Morality can emphasize the value of goodness, and invite to the pursuit of it, as effectually as one which represents the good of all conscious beings as the end, and Morality as an element in that end, is another point on which my view differs fundamentally from Von Hartmann's. But at bottom that very acute writer admits the fundamental postulate of all rational Morality and all ethical Religion—that the ultimate end of human conduct is (albeit, according to him, somewhat indirectly) to promote the true end of the Universe. And he realizes the futility of attempting to find an adequate theoretical justification or an adequate motive in practice for a Morality going beyond compliance with the conventional requirements of one's immediate circle in any view of Ethics which does not involve this intimate connexion with Religion.

VII

The two eminent thinkers whom we have last examined have been found to be after all not thorough-going in their doctrine of a super-moral Absolute; and I have attempted to contend that this want of thoroughness involves inconsistency. In the case of Professor Taylor, however, it is otherwise. With him the contradiction between the moral point of view and the 'absolute' point of view inadequately adumbrated in the religious consciousness is final and irreconcilable, unqualified by the doctrine of 'degrees of truth and reality,' of which in other connexions he makes so much [1]. I have already pointed out that Professor Taylor, in refusing to accept Mr. Bradley's doctrine that the moral consciousness pronounces all self-sacrifice and all self-realization to be good and equally good, has really given up the principal ground on which Mr. Bradley seeks to convict Morality of

[1] *The Problem of Conduct*, chap. viii.

internal contradiction, and therefore refuses to attribute it to the Absolute. Professor Taylor's indictment against Morality seems to me, if I may say so with sincere respect, to turn upon more obvious confusions than those which I have had the temerity to suspect in Mr. Bradley. In the first place, he confuses the practical difficulty which the moral consciousness experiences in deciding questions of Casuistry with the intrinsic impossibility of such a solution. He fails to see that our mistakes and difficulties in this department constitute no more ground for doubting the objective validity of Moral Reason as such than the blunders or perplexities of a schoolboy do for attributing a merely subjective validity to the multiplication table. On this point I have already dwelt. Secondly, Professor Taylor seems to think that the position of those who attribute objectivity to the moral judgement, and consequently moral goodness to God, is sufficiently refuted by pointing to the undoubted fact that the details of human duty depend in part upon the circumstances and physical organization of human nature—that the Seventh Commandment, for instance, would have no meaning in reference to the conduct of sexless beings, and so on. But to maintain that for beings otherwise constituted the details of the Moral Law might be different from what they are for us does not impugn the objective validity of the judgement that for men adultery is wrong. By saying that the judgement is objectively true we mean that every intelligence, divine, angelic, or otherwise, must recognize its truth, or, if it does not recognize it, is in error. And the judgement as to what is right or wrong for man must ultimately be based on judgements of value which ought to govern the volition of all rational beings in all circumstances. The judgement that the mutual love of husband and wife in an ideal marriage is one of the noblest things on this planet is none the less true because the lower animals are incapable of it, or because beings of a higher order may be above it. And the truth of that proposition depends ultimately upon the judgement which asserts the value of Love in general—a judgement which we have every reason for believing to spring from one, and that the most important, element in the character of God.

Against the position taken up by Professor Taylor I can only

refer back to those arguments in favour of the objective character of the Moral Law, and against the Moral Sense position of which his ethical system is virtually a revival, which have already been developed in the chapter on 'Reason and Feeling.' If by giving up the attempt to recognize in Morality even an imperfect revelation of ultimate Reality, Professor Taylor has avoided some of the difficulties which beset the position of Mr. Bradley and Von Hartmann, it is hard to see what grounds a writer who takes so thoroughly naturalistic or 'psychological' a view of Ethics can have left for the assumption which is intelligible in ethical Rationalists—that, though God is not moral, the Universe as a whole is good. If our moral judgements are, not merely (as they are to Mr. Bradley) riddled with contradictions, and so very inadequate and untrustworthy presentments of Reality, but purely and unmitigatedly subjective, what reason has Professor Taylor for pronouncing that the Universe as a whole is perfectly good? Mr. Bradley has never denied that moral judgements are rational; he has not even denied them a kind of objectivity; Professor Taylor has reduced them to modes of feeling. This seems to follow from the declaration [1] that our moral judgements are simply 'feelings of approval and disapproval,' while it is further admitted that 'to say that I approve such and such an action or quality is, in fact, to say that when I imagine its entrance into the course of my future experience my state of mind is a pleasant one [2].' Yet if the idea of value is not a category of thought, what can be meant by the judgement that the world is perfectly good on the whole? What can 'good' in such a connexion mean? For Professor Taylor it ought only to mean that it excites a particular kind of feeling in the genus *homo* or some of its members. But Professor Taylor admits that it does not excite this feeling in him, for to him as a man sin and pain appear bad. On what ground then can he pronounce that for the Absolute or in the Absolute they appear good? If the judgement of value be merely a feeling, why should we suppose that the Absolute shares the peculiar mode of human feeling which we style moral; or if we do think that the Absolute shares these human emotions, or

[1] *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 104. [2] Ib. p. 124.

something analogous to them, why should we suppose that they are excited in Him by different courses of action from those which excite them in us? To oppose to our deliberate judgements of value an *a priori* construction about the requirements of absolute harmony and the like in a perfect or absolute or 'pure' experience seems to me to put mere intellectual aspirations in place of the rational interpretation of actual experience.

Professor Taylor does not seem to me to escape the difficulties of his position by the admission that, though the moral judgement does not actually constitute a revelation of pure truth, it does tell us something about the nature of absolute Reality. He pronounces not merely (like Mr. Bradley) that from the point of view of the Absolute badness is good, but that it is *as* good as goodness. The paean in praise of wickedness with which Professor Taylor has concluded his book is as eloquent as any that was ever sung in praise of Virtue. Now this seems to imply that Professor Taylor has not made up his mind whether Morality is self-contradictory and one-sided (1) only in the same sense as all the Sciences, or (2) *unlike* ordinary scientific knowledge. The former contention, even if established, would not justify the assertion that the bad man in his place contributes as much to the good of the Universe as the good man, any more than a theoretical admission of abstractness or 'one-sidedness' in scientific knowledge would justify the assertion that the denial of the law of gravitation is as true as the assertion of it. And when Professor Taylor pronounces that the vice which the moral consciousness pronounces bad is as valuable as the virtue which it pronounces good, he is declaring not that our moral judgements are an inadequate expression of the nature of Reality, but that the nature of Reality is the opposite of that which the moral consciousness pronounces it to be. And in so pronouncing he claims (let me urge once more) to possess precisely that knowledge of absolute truth which his theory disclaims. Once more, to all forms of the assertion that what we call badness is actually good I oppose the verdict of the moral consciousness. If that verdict is to be trusted, the assertion is false: if it is not to be trusted, it is impossible for Mr. Bradley or Professor Taylor to know that badness is good: for it is only by an exercise of

the moral consciousness that we can know whether a thing is good or not.

Professor Taylor will no doubt appeal to the testimony of the religious consciousness. It would take too long to examine here all the astounding things which Professor Taylor and other super-Moralists have told us about the religious consciousness. It is true that in flights of religious rhetoric and ecstasies of Mysticism religious minds have sometimes involved themselves in all the difficulties of philosophic Optimism. But, speaking broadly, the religious consciousness has never really 'transcended' the distinction between good and evil in the way in which it is assumed to do by Professor Taylor. It has never declared that the distinction between moral and immoral is already abolished, and has for the religious man no existence [1]. It has always recognized the existence of evil in the present. Its faith has been—not, indeed, that the distinction between moral and immoral is to be done away with—but that, for all or for some, evil is already partially and will hereafter be more completely turned into good. Its faith has been

> that good shall fall
> At last—far off—at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring.

This has been at bottom—in greater or less degree—the real attitude of the deepest religious thought and feeling towards the evil in the world. And in so far as that faith has been accepted, Religion has, I venture to think, done more for the world than it would have done by persuading it that the difference between virtue and vice is a mere human delusion.

It is difficult to understand how Professor Taylor can believe that the Moral Law can, either from the point of view of reflective Reason or as a matter of psychological fact, retain its full force and validity for minds which have seen through it, and know that from the absolute point of view, and therefore for God, that Law possesses no validity whatever. If the Absolute had kept its own secret, one might understand how the delusion might have done its work in furthering the Absolute's 'super-

[1] Always excepting the Theologians who make Morality dependent upon the arbitrary Will of God.

moral' purposes; but, now that Professor Taylor has found it out, must not people put to themselves the question whether the absolute point of view is not the right point of view, and whether they can be blamed for doing what will promote the absolute end, and ignoring distinctions which for the truly rational consciousness have no existence or meaning whatever? Professor Taylor is not, indeed, very anxious to claim Religion as an ally of Morality: that, he appears to consider, would involve a kind of degradation for Religion. And yet, as he does not disavow a real sympathy not merely with the highly esoteric 'Religion' of our super-moral Philosophers but with the ordinary 'Evangelical Christianity' which is known to history and common life, he would, I presume, regard Religion as not wholly unconnected with, or, at all events, as not antagonistic to, ordinary human Morality. How belief in a deity who, it would appear, delights in wickedness at least as much as he delights in goodness can be in any way favourable to the moral life it is difficult to understand. Some connexion at least between the end for man and the end of the Universe is essential to the recognition of an objective significance in the moral judgement, and without the recognition of such an objective significance, Morality becomes a very different thing from what it is for the developed moral consciousness [1].

[1] In justice to Professor Taylor I ought to say that the attitude which he adopts towards Morality in his later *Elements of Metaphysic* seems to me materially different from that taken up in the *Problem of Conduct*. In the former he is willing even to accept (doubtless with reserves and apologies) the idea that one side of the Absolute's nature may be expressed by the word Love, and generally appears—not merely in his character as a man, but also as a Philosopher—to interpret the nature of the Absolute in terms of our moral ideals. Whether he would attempt to reconcile these assertions with the position taken up in his earlier work I am unable to say. I will only add that the Optimism of the former work seems to be much qualified. It would now appear that Reality is only 'good on the whole,' and that it is not better because that would be impossible. These propositions, with which I for one should not be disposed to quarrel, seem to me quite different from the through and through perfection which, in the *Problem of Conduct*, is ascribed not merely to the world as a whole, but to everything in it. Since writing this note I have seen Professor Taylor's review of Dr. McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion* in the *Philosophical Review* (July, 1906), in which he explicitly gives up the view which I have criticized.

VIII

We have, then, discovered no reason in the arguments of the super-moral Religionists for abandoning the position that the end prescribed to man by his own moral consciousness must be part of the true end of the Universe. That there is one absolute standard of values, which is the same for all rational beings, is just what Morality means. Nothing less than that is implied by the idea of absolute value which underlies the simplest moral judgement, when its implications are analysed and reflected on.

It may, indeed, be suggested that we do possess in human intelligence the form of the Moral Law—the bare idea of an end, the bare notion of something which ought absolutely to be done—without any power of giving a content to that form, of saying what things in particular possess this value, and what things therefore ought actually to be done. But such a view implies a more than Kantian divorce of form from content. The form or category of the Moral Law is only got by abstraction from actual concrete moral judgements. To maintain that we do know that the Universe has an end, though we are wholly without the power of determining what that end is, would be (as I have already suggested) like maintaining that we have indeed a conception of number which is of objective validity, but that we have no reason to believe that the actual contents of the multiplication table belong to any region but that of mere 'appearance.' Neither in the ethical nor in any other department of human thought is it possible to prove that our thought does not deceive us: and in this as in other spheres our thought is doubtless inadequate. The wide differences of opinion which are found even in the developed human intelligence in the matter of Ethics constitute a reason, indeed, for supposing that our conception of the ultimate end—the conception hitherto reached by any actual human being—represents an inadequate view of the truth; but they supply no reason for assuming a total and fundamental discrepancy between a moral truth, which is merely human, and a metaphysical or religious truth, which is divine. Our ethical, like all our knowledge, is inade-

quate—more inadequate no doubt than the knowledge already attained in some branches of Physical Science, which is less inexact within its own limits just because it is more abstract and incomplete. It is not enough to say, as Von Hartmann [1] at times seems disposed to say, that moral judgements do represent a particular means to the ultimate end, but that the end itself may be quite different. For the very essence of the moral judgement is that the end towards which we conceive it to be right to direct our actions possesses absolute value. If we are fundamentally deceived as to that, we have no reason to believe that these acts are even a means to the true end [2]. That the ends to which we attribute value may be ends which ought not in particular cases to be attained because their attainment would make impossible the attainment of ends still more valuable, may very well be the case. That in some such direction is to be found the ultimate explanation of the existence of evil has already been asserted, but that evil is a means to the greatest attainable good is a proposition which is only maintainable upon the hypothesis that there is in the ultimate nature of things—that is to say the ultimate nature of God—an inherent reason why greater good should not be attainable. It may be impossible to prove—even in the sense in which any ultimate metaphysical truth is capable of proof—that that ultimate reason is not to be sought in a defect of goodness in the Being from whom all Reality is derived. But the dilemma forces itself upon us that the explanation must be sought either in such a moral limitation or in some other kind of limitation—a limitation which, in the doubtless inadequate and analogical language which we are always compelled to use in speaking of ultimate

[1] I have pointed out above (p. 278) that this is only one aspect of his thought.

[2] This is quite consistent with maintaining that, when there is no consciousness of an end at all, in the lower animals and in men so long and so far as they have impulses which are independent of their rational judgements, such impulses may be directed towards the true end of the Universe. The savage's passion of Revenge tends no doubt in many ways to the true end of the Universe, but, as soon as he is capable of feeling that he ought to restrain it, the restraint must tend to that end more than the unlimited indulgence of it.

Reality, may be best described as a limitation of Power. To adopt the former alternative would involve the strange idea that the Being from whom all our ideas are derived, and who cannot reasonably be thought of as subject to the limitations which are connected with the life of the bodily organism, deliberately acts in a way contrary to the dictates of his own thought, to judgements which present themselves to Him as necessary truths: the latter view has nothing against it but a groundless assumption. To this consideration may be added the extreme improbability (on any theory which represents the Universe as rational) that the derived human consciousness should be superior in reasonableness of insight or in reasonableness of will to its source, or at least under an unavoidable necessity of thinking itself so—a far greater improbability than is involved in supposing that the power of realizing its ideals possessed by the ultimate Will, while enormously transcending that of the derived will, should still fall short of a power to produce good only with no evil at all.

Not only is the hypothesis of pure Optimism not necessary to Morality; it is positively hostile to it. It is a postulate of Morality that the ends that we feel ourselves bound to work for should be in some measure attainable if we will them, but it is a postulate of Morality also that they should not be completely attainable, if we do not will them. The very essence of the moral judgement is not merely that the right act promotes the end, but that the wrong act retards it. The judgement that the act is really a means to the end may of course be erroneous like any other particular human judgement; but it is the very heart of all our ethical thinking that, if and in so far as the judgement is ethically justified, it is a real means to the absolute end. Even the really bad act may of course be a means to an ultimate good, but it must be a means to a less good than might have been attained if the action ethically right in the circumstances had been done. Had the agent a full knowledge that his act would produce more good than harm, the action would have been a right action. When more good than harm comes out of an action which it was sinful in the agent to will, that must be because he did not know of the good effects, or because he willed them for some other reason than these good effects. So the moral

consciousness pronounces, and its pronouncement can only be a true one if a wrong act really makes the world worse than it would otherwise have been[1]. Only if the Universe is less good than a Universe which we can imagine, can the alternative which is presented to us in every act of moral judgement be, as our moral consciousness assures us that it is, a real alternative. It is not here asserted that in every or any such choice between alternatives the possibility of the alternative actually rejected was, even from the point of view of absolute and complete knowledge, a real possibility[2]: but only that, if the act ethically right had been done instead of the act ethically wrong, the Universe on the whole would have been a better Universe than it actually is. Such is the postulate implied by every moral system which really accepts the idea of an objective Morality reflected, however imperfectly, in our ethical judgements—reflected imperfectly, but reflected less and less imperfectly as those judgements become ethically more advanced and more reasonable. The end of the Universe must be the evolution of souls in which what our moral consciousness pronounces good shall be more and more realized. If less good is at any time realized in preference to more good, that represents one of those inherent limitations without the assumption of which we cannot give any reasonable or intelligible account of the Universe being what it is.

In speaking of the end of the Universe we must not of course assume that the realization of this end lies only in the future, that it is literally a 'far off divine event': whatever has any value in the present forms part of the end. In so far, for instance, as the lower animals enjoy pleasure, that is good—a partial realization of the ultimate end, though it may be also a means to some further and greater good. When an

[1] If the 'O felix culpa' of the Roman Liturgy is to be justified, we should have to say that, had Adam known the consequences (according to traditional Theology) of his sin, it would not have been a sin. I do not deny that a particular wrong act, done with bad intentions, might sometimes incidentally leave the world better than it would have been without that particular wrong act, but then a world in which the good effect would have been produced without the sin would have been still better.

[2] I am not here arguing for a 'liberum arbitrium indifferentiae,' as is explained in the next chapter.

animal suffers, that must be a means to a good otherwise unattainable for itself or its fellows or for some higher race yet to be evolved. If the animal is incapable of the higher goods which human beings enjoy, that must be because the inherent limitations of Reality make it impossible that that animal should have been a moral being without a larger loss of good upon the whole. The end which we must suppose to be the end of the Universe must be the greatest good on the whole, the greatest good that is possible; that is to say, the good that necessarily flows from a Will of perfect goodness but limited power. And human duty must consist in co-operation with that Will. Only the Religion which proclaims that identity between the divine end and the end revealed in the moral consciousness at its highest can be regarded as finally and absolutely valuable either as an aid to Morality or as an end in itself, though, of course, Religions which more or less fall short of this ideal may have their relative and temporary justification. And if a Religion is not of use in the interests of Morality—that is to say, of that end which Morality bids us promote—it is of no use at all, upon the assumption which we have throughout made and attempted to justify—the assumption that our moral judgements possess objective validity.

It may be objected that we have no right to oppose the Goodness of God to his Power, as though they were distinct qualities controlling and limiting one another, and to pronounce the one unlimited, and the other limited. I should reply that every distinction of elements or of aspects in the divine nature based upon the analogy of human experience must necessarily be an inadequate representation of the ultimate nature of Reality. We can distinguish between thought and feeling and willing in men: and we cannot think of the divine Mind at all without supposing that in that Mind, too, there is thinking and feeling and willing, or something analogous to each of them. And yet it is impossible that thought and feeling can be related in God as they are related in us—that in God the object of thought should be, as it is in us, something not actually experienced, something merely representative of a reality without being that reality; that God's thought consists in making abstractions which (as Mr. Bradley has taught us) necessarily

leave out so much of the actual fact[1], in inferences which imply that something has become known which was previously unknown; or again, that feeling should be in God exactly what it is in beings whose experience is limited and conditioned by a material organism. And yet without these distinctions of thought and feeling we cannot attach any significance to the idea of Mind, and could mean nothing when we say that God is Mind or Spirit. All human thinking implies abstraction—that is to say, the separation in thought of aspects of Reality which in actual fact are not apart but together. When we oppose God's Goodness to his Power, we are using exactly the same kind of abstraction which we use in distinguishing between feeling and thought and will in God. And there is this further justification of our procedure. I can attach a definite meaning to the idea of perfect goodness—as definite as any conception that I can form of a Spirit in which the limitations and imperfections of the spirits actually known to my experience are left out. The idea of 'infinite' or 'unlimited' power is a meaningless expression. It implies an ultimate Reality—a Will which has no definite characteristics or properties at all. And further, such a concept implies a contradiction to what we mean when we say that God is perfectly good. However much good there was in any actual world—even if that good were unqualified by any evil,—we could always ask 'why should there not have been twice that good?' And to that question there could never be an answer as long as we regard God as a Being in whom there are infinite or unlimited potentialities of creation.

IX

To ask what is the truth and value of the various historical Religions in accordance with the standard here set up, is an enquiry which would carry us far beyond the limits of the present work. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that Religion has never exercised any great or widespread moral influence over mankind in a purely abstract or philosophical form.

[1] e.g. the statement 'trees are green,' or even 'this tree is green,' does not tell us anything about the particular kind of green: no tree is green in general, and yet all thought involves the use of Universals.

In their historical form the higher Religions of mankind have always been, and are likely to be for the most part, the creations of great personalities, developed and appropriated by societies. In this social appropriation of Religions which have been founded by a particular Founder or have gradually evolved at a particular epoch in time, the criticism, the interpretations or the corrections supplied by Philosophy, and particularly by ethical Philosophy, have played an important and conspicuous part. But the business of the Philosopher who has any belief in the power and value of Religion is rather to determine the attitude of the reflective mind towards existing Religions and Churches than to substitute some system of his own for them. An examination of the actual contents of the higher Religions is the business of religious, and not of purely ethical, Philosophy. But a few remarks may be made on the attitude which ought to be adopted towards existing forms of Religion by any one who has so far followed the present writer's argument.

All theistic Religions have more or less consciously and consistently asserted that view of the relation between the absolute end and the moral end which has been set forth in this work. They have all asserted that the Will of God is a Will for the best possible. The religious consciousness has at all times been exposed to the temptation to distort this proposition into the assertion that what God wills is, just because it is actually willed, the ethically best. But, though many historical Religions have tended towards Theism and consequently towards that identification of Religion and Ethics which I have here pleaded, only three great historical Religions have completely and consistently realized that goal: Judaism, the Christianity which has grown out of Judaism, and the Mohammedanism which, if not actually a mere corruption of Judaism and Christianity, would certainly not have been what it is without them. Only perhaps in Christianity, and in Christianity at its best, has that identification of the ethically best with the actual Will of God been fully realized and kept free from degenerating into the immoral proposition that the Will of God, as revealed not in the moral consciousness but in the actual course of events, is the ethically best[1]. The

[1] I do not, of course, deny that at certain periods this idea has appeared

claim of Christianity to be the 'absolute' or 'final' Religion must rest in the long run firstly upon the superior clearness and definiteness with which it proclaims a conception of God based upon the ethical ideal; secondly, upon the fact that its ethical ideal represents the moral ideal at its highest.

It may be asked 'where is this Christian ideal to be found, and how is it known to be the highest?' To the second of these questions I need only answer that the moral consciousness alone can be the final judge of the truth, validity, and sufficiency of a moral ideal. The first is an historical question which I have here no room to answer, except by expressing my belief that the ideal alike of human life and of the divine Nature actually to be found in the critically sifted records of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ is, in its essential principles, the ideal which the moral consciousness of Humanity still accepts and proclaims [1]. At the same time it is only in principle and not in detail (as has been already insisted [2]) that there can be any finality about any moral ideal whatever, and consequently in any Religion which is to include a moral ideal. The idea of a development through the consciousness of the religious community is as essential to a just conception of Christianity as the assertion of the unique importance of the historical Christ. If there were no development of the moral ideal, and of the Theology which is based upon the moral ideal, the inherited and stereotyped ideal of the past would no longer express the living convictions of a world which moves. In proportion as any development should not be in its essence a real development in harmony with the spirit of the historic Christ, that development could not claim to be really Christian, but it is impossible to define *a priori* what degree of development would involve

in Christian Theology, or that it is familiar to individual enlightened adherents of other Religions, particularly to the late Judaism which can hardly have been uninfluenced by Christian ideas.

[1] If I should be wrong in this view, I should have made a mistake as an Historian, and as a Theologian in so far as the content of Theology is necessarily in part derived from History, but the mistake would leave my Moral Philosophy unaffected. I make this remark to avoid a possible misrepresentation of the above pages.

[2] Book II, chap. v.

such a new departure as to render the Religion that admitted it no longer entitled to the distinctive name of Christianity. That the ideal which is still approved by the most developed moral consciousness of the present day is such a legitimate development of the teaching and character of Jesus is a proposition which could, I believe, be supported by a critical examination of the historical facts. If the reasons which have been given already[1] for believing that that ideal in its essence will not be transcended are sound, the Religion of the future will remain Christianity, however much it may hereafter be developed by growing experience on the one hand and by the development of the moral consciousness on the other. If the essence of true Religion be the identification of the Will of God with the highest ethical ideal, every development of the moral ideal will necessarily carry with it a corresponding religious development. Both on the religious and on the ethical side, therefore, Christianity can only claim to be the final or absolute Religion by showing itself, at the same time, also a constantly growing and developing Religion. And the belief in such a development is historically an essential and characteristic element in the Religion itself. Belief in the Holy Ghost is as much an article of the Christian Creed as belief in the historic Son of God.

X

The view that the religious attitude carries us into some super-moral region and enables us to attain a point of view from which moral distinctions are 'transcended' has already been sufficiently dealt with. That such a Religion is possible may be freely admitted. But such Religion is, as I contend, a Religion which, even from the point of view of those who regard Morality as of merely human and subjective validity, ought not to be encouraged. Such is precisely the kind of Religion which at every age of the world's history exists in sufficient abundance to supply no little justification for the Lucretian verdict upon Religion in general:

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

[1] Above, p. 177 sq.

If the value of everything is determined by the moral judgement, there can be no value in a Religion which is opposed to Morality. But even those who believe in a Morality which is in essential harmony with Religion, and in a Religion which does not seek to 'transcend' Morality, may possibly object to our limiting the contents of the religious consciousness entirely to the moral ideal. And no doubt a certain amount of explanation or qualification is required to justify the language which I have used. It has already been pointed out that we cannot isolate the moral consciousness. Every moral ideal implies a great deal besides itself. If the end which it is a moral duty to pursue includes the effort to attain a true view of the Cosmos and a true appreciation of everything in it which there is value in knowing or beauty in contemplating, the assertion that our knowledge of God is based entirely upon the moral ideal will not necessarily imply that our idea of God must owe nothing to the development of the scientific or the aesthetic consciousness, or foster that narrowness and austerity of view which is often associated with strong assertions of the importance of 'moral,' 'ethical,' or 'practical' interests. An adequate recognition of the value which our Moral Reason discovers in Science and in Art, in the beauty possessed by the worlds of Nature and of imagination, is part of true Morality, and therefore must contribute its share to our conception of God and of the divine end. If God wills Nature, every part of Nature must tell us something of God. And every change in our scientific or aesthetic attitude towards the world must bring with it some change in our attitude or subjective feeling towards God. If by Religion we mean a man's total attitude—intellectual, emotional, and practical—towards the Universe as a whole, it cannot be denied that intellectual progress is continually bringing with it changes in Religion, even apart from the changes which increased knowledge of Nature necessarily brings with it in the details of human duty. It is of great importance, no doubt, to recognize that, while the detailed knowledge of scientific law affects very slightly either our emotional or our practical attitude towards the Universe as a whole or the Mind of which that Universe is the expression, the larger changes in man's attitude towards Nature—know-

ledge of the vastness of the Universe, belief in the universality of natural law, the substitution of evolution for special creation and the like—do affect in important ways our attitude towards God. But after all it remains true that it is only from the moral consciousness that we can gather any idea of the character or final purpose of God. Nature tells us something about what God actually wills, but knows nothing of the difference between ends and means: it tells us nothing about values; and therefore, by itself, it tells us nothing about the character of God and the deeper meaning of the Universe. For it is not merely because things *are*, but because they have value, that we believe that they form part of the end for God. And our knowledge of the character or will of God is based upon our conception of his end. The scientific consciousness may tell us that a law is true; the aesthetic consciousness may tell us that the world is beautiful. But that Truth and Beauty in general, or that particular truths and particular beauties, have value, is revealed to us only by the moral or value-judging consciousness. And it is our ideas of value that determine our practical attitude towards God and the world, and that inspire those emotions which are capable of affecting the will. It is the attitude of the will, together with the knowledge and the emotions which affect the will, that we generally understand by the term Religion.

That mere intellectual knowledge of Nature's laws does not by itself constitute Religion or even what we call religious belief, there is a general consensus. There is perhaps a tendency in some quarters to give the name of Religion to the emotion which is inspired by the scientific knowledge and the aesthetic appreciation of Nature, even when the emotion does not in any direct and immediate way affect action[1]. Whether such emotion can be called religious, is a question of words which it is hardly worth while to discuss. Knowledge and aesthetic appreciation and the emotions associated with them are no doubt elements in the ideal relation towards God, and so far they may be called religious. But they can only be regarded as constituting a very subordinate element in Religion for two reasons. In the first place, religious belief is, according to the ordinary use of language, belief about

[1] e.g. in Seeley's *Natural Religion*.

the ultimate nature of things, not about their detail. In the second place, there is a pretty general disposition to recognize that even belief about the ultimate nature of things is not religious except in so far as it has, directly or indirectly, some bearing upon practice. And, though the pursuit of Truth and Beauty are elements in the practical ideal, they are so only in a very subordinate degree for the great majority of men. Though for artists or scholars the pursuit of these things forms a large part of their duty (just as detailed knowledge of particular Sciences may have an important bearing upon the duties of particular professions), it is only that part of a man's belief and that kind of emotion which have some bearing upon human duty in general which we commonly regard as religious. Knowledge of the Universe in general and the emotions which its Beauty excites do, indeed, contribute something to our knowledge of God, and to the ideal feeling towards Him; but, since such knowledge and feeling form only in a restricted degree the duty of every one, we shall not be far wrong in saying that the value of right religious belief and religious emotion lies chiefly in their tendency to promote right action. It is only the kind of truth which is capable of affecting practice, and the kind of emotion which conduces to right practice, that we can naturally regard as belonging to Religion. Such an account of the matter is no doubt vague, and anything but a vague definition would necessarily misrepresent the facts: for a man's Religion is not marked off by any sharp dividing line from other aspects of his life. Religious belief is one particular aspect of a man's total belief about the world; religious emotion is not any one specific emotion, but a particular aspect of his emotional attitude towards the Universe or its ultimate source; religious conduct is good conduct in general when looked upon as representing a right attitude of the will towards the ultimate source of Reality.

If, therefore, we ask whether we are to regard Religion as *merely* a means to Morality, we shall answer that we shall do so only upon the condition that our idea of Morality is wide enough to include the duty of seeking for Truth, and of aiming at a right state of the emotions, for their own sakes. Truth and ideal

emotion no doubt include much that has no direct and immediate bearing upon the duty of the individual man, except his duty towards the true and the beautiful. And, inasmuch as we do not recognize the pursuit of all kinds of truth and the cultivation of every kind of emotion as the duty of every man, we are not accustomed to include detailed knowledge of the world and the cultivation of every kind of emotion in our conception of Religion, though no doubt the cultivation of these things forms the duty of some people. But we do hold that some knowledge about the world in general and some kind of emotion connected with that view are essential to the ideal life of every one: and it is just that knowledge and emotion which we regard as religious. Not every one need be or can be a Philosopher or an Artist, but everybody can be and ought to be religious. The objection to speaking of Religion as a mere means to Morality is that it seems to suggest an ideal of life in which Knowledge and Beauty have no place. On the other hand, the tendency to emphasize the 'religious' character of mere intellectual insight and ordinary aesthetic emotion tends to an underestimate of the supreme value which the healthy moral consciousness accords to the rightly directed will. By general consent of those who take the religious view of life at all, Religion is the most important thing in the world. Any view of Religion, therefore, which encourages the disposition to give a higher place to any other aspect of life than that which is taken by the moral consciousness must be a false or one-sided view of it on the supposition which has been defended in these pages; namely, that the moral consciousness is the organ of truth, and the chief source—in a sense the sole source—of religious knowledge. Religion can only be the most important thing in life if it includes Morality and the feelings, emotions, desires to which the moral consciousness attributes supreme value, and excludes those which the moral consciousness condemns. We are dealing here with a question of values, and if our moral consciousness does not give us any true information about values, assuredly we can know nothing at all about values: for the moral consciousness means that side of our consciousness which judges of values.

XI

We have been dealing so far with the question of the relation between Religion and Ethics in general. But the subject leads on to the discussion of a particular ethical question—the nature of what are usually called, in a narrower sense, religious duties. Are worship and other religious observances of a similar character ends in themselves, or are they merely means to the performance of duty? The answer is substantially implied in the view we have already taken of the relation between Religion and Ethics in general. If our conception of God be grounded upon our moral ideal, it is impossible to suppose that He has arbitrarily prescribed duties which have no bearing upon our relation to the highest moral ideal. To fear God, as the perfectly righteous Will, and to keep those commandments which necessarily flow from a perfectly righteous Will, must literally constitute the whole duty of man. We cannot—after the fashion not so much of the older Christian thinkers as of the semi-deistic eighteenth-century divines—speak as though, by a kind of arbitrary appendix to the moral law, a duty of going to Church had been imposed, as a sort of personal compliment to the Almighty, independently of its effects upon the mind and character of the worshipper. There is nothing substantially wrong in saying that the value of all such observances consists solely in their effects upon character and life. Only it must be remembered that the cultivation of right ideas about the world in general and a right emotional response to those ideas is a part of the true ideal of life. The outward acts of worship—the saying or singing of words, the performance of ceremonies, the utterance of prayer or praise, the listening to exhortation or instruction—can only be regarded as valuable because they express and tend to cultivate a right state of the soul, but that right state of the soul is in a sense an end-in-itself. If the Will of God is that we should serve our brethren, the right state of the soul will be one which is dominated by that desire; but inasmuch as a certain state of intellect and emotion as well as of will forms part of the true end for man, acts of worship which tend to promote true knowledge of God and a sense of the beauty of God's world will have a value

of their own independently of the utility which they possess as a direct incitement and preparation for action. In the ideal love of God there are aesthetic and intellectual elements—knowledge of God's nature, awe and reverence for the wonder of the world, admiration of its beauty, considered as a revelation of the Mind which makes it—as well as the distinctly moral element (in the narrower sense of the word) which consists in reverence for the character of God. In so far as these things enter into Religion, there is a meaning in saying that Religion is an end-in-itself, and an end which does not consist exclusively in practical Morality; and, in as far as worship is a means of cultivating such a religious state of mind, it may be regarded as more than a means to an end beyond itself. It becomes a kind of spiritual culture, which, like the more purely intellectual and aesthetic culture, is both a means and an end—a means to the ideal life of the soul but also one of those activities in which that life consists. I need not repeat here what has been said about the duty of subordinating the pursuit of truth and of beauty to the true love of our fellow-men—that is to say, the desire to promote for them also a good which includes the love of truth and of beauty. Only when thus subordinated do they form elements in the love of God, and become part of the end which worship promotes, and of which in a sense it forms a part.

Socrates was wont to ask whether Virtue can be taught. Whatever exact sense be given to the word 'teach,' few reflecting persons would deny that it is possible for people to make themselves and one another more virtuous by systematic cultivation of the ethical side of their nature. In the history of the past by far the most successful means of direct moral culture which the world has succeeded in inventing, among peoples which have risen to the level of ethical Religion, have been the societies called Churches and the institution called public Worship in all its forms[1]. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the

[1] If we except the influence of Education, which, where it has possessed sufficient power to be compared in its influence on life with that of ethical Religion, has seldom been unconnected with a more directly religious influence. If it be suggested that private devotion is often a still more powerful influence than that of public Worship, I should admit the fact,

naïveté of the idea that individuals as a rule or societies in any case can give up this means of moral culture, and put nothing in its place, without a more or less serious descent to a lower moral level. We may smile at some of the Positivist imitations of Catholic worship, but the Positivists are assuredly right in holding that Morality requires the support of instruction and exhortation, of spiritual self-expression and recollection, of social observance and mutual encouragement. A comparative survey of the moral condition of different civilized countries at the present moment supplies strong empirical evidence in favour of such a view. Those who believe that the institutions of Church and Worship in their old forms have lost their efficacy, or that they are incapable of a reform which will restore it, are bound to give serious consideration to the question how they can be replaced. For those who do believe in their efficacy and value, there is no more pressing or more obvious duty than to consider how they may be made more efficient organs for the discharge of their absolutely indispensable social function.

but should add that there is little reason to believe that on any large scale such habits of private devotion have survived, or ever will survive, the entire desuetude of public Worship. Just as the internal Conscience is only created and educated by a powerful 'external Conscience,' so private Religion is created and educated by the external manifestations, and social organization, of Religion.

CHAPTER III

FREE-WILL

I

In dealing with the metaphysical postulates or presuppositions of Morality, we came to the conclusion that there can be no Morality unless our theory of the Universe is such that the acts of the individual can in some real sense be ascribed to the self. But as to the exact sense in which these acts are to be so ascribed, nothing has yet been determined. A full discussion of the problem usually known as that of Free-will belongs, in my opinion, rather to a general system of Metaphysic than to a treatise on Ethics. Yet the idea of Free-will is, or has been supposed to be, so intimately connected with our ultimate moral ideas that the Moral Philosopher must at least give some account of his own attitude towards it, although it may be an attitude which could only be adequately justified by a complete exposition of his theory of the Universe.

What then is the question of Free-will? There can be no doubt that the plain man, prior to reflection, does habitually assume that his actions are not the necessary results of preceding actions or of anything else in the Universe before those acts took place; that no knowledge of his previous actions, or even of his previous character—at least of his original character before it was gradually moulded by his own acts of voluntary choice—could possibly enable any one else, or even himself, to predict with certainty how he would act in any given complication of circumstances. When he looks back upon past misdoing, he declares that that misdoing is something which need not have occurred. No matter what he was or what he did before that act, no matter what original nature or character he brought with him into the world, all else up to that moment might have been the same, and yet that act might have remained

undone. If a small amount of reflection will induce some hesitation as to the unconsidered or impulsive acts which seem traceable to habit—formed, as he may still be disposed to contend, by previous acts of free and undetermined choice—he will at least insist that acts of deliberate and reflective choice between alternatives of real moral significance are strictly undetermined and essentially unpredictable, at all events by any intelligence which can only arrive at a knowledge of the future by inference from the past and the present. This is what the plain man understands by freedom of the will: and there are Philosophers who declare that the plain man is right, and are ready even to follow him into his further assertion that, if Free-will in this sense did not exist, Morality would lose all its value, its meaning, its very existence. On the other hand, it is maintained by the Determinist that actions are the necessary results of the man's original nature or constitution, as modified by the whole series of influences, social and physical, which have acted upon him from the moment of birth up to the moment of action. Actions are the necessary result of original character and environment. Original character and environment being the same, the act could not have been different. Given an adequate knowledge of both, the act could always have been predicted. An easy way of realizing the problem, the nature of which is frequently misconceived, and that by no means only by beginners in Philosophy, is to suppose (*per impossibile* no doubt) two twin brothers endowed originally with absolutely identical natures, and exposed from the moment of birth to exactly the same social and other influences. At the age of twenty, according to the Determinist theory, their characters would be precisely the same, and in any given circumstances they would act in precisely the same way: according to the libertarian view one of them might have become a saint, and the other a scoundrel.

We may assume for the present that the question of Free-will or Determinism turns upon this question of predictability, though hereafter some qualification of this assumption may be required. It must not, indeed, be supposed (as is often done in popular argument on both sides) that the Determinist imagines that an adequate knowledge of psychological or sociological law would

enable him to predict a man's future conduct from his past actions. Whatever we understand by character, and however we envisage its relation to brain and nervous system, no man's character is fully expressed by his actual conduct in the past. Character must always include undeveloped possibilities. The response which a character will make to a new stimulus, or even to the repetition of an old stimulus [1], can never be inferred with absolute certainty from the response it has made to previous stimuli. Nor need a sudden alteration in a man's habitual conduct necessarily imply that some fresh and unusual external influence has been brought to bear upon him. For a man's character may be such as to react in one way to a given stimulus ninety-nine times, and in a different way to the hundredth, just because it is the hundredth. A man may be so constituted as to listen unmoved to a thousand sermons, and yet to have his whole life altered by the thousand and first—not essentially different in its general character from the former; while another, whose outer and even inner life has been to all appearance previously similar, may remain equally inaccessible to any number of such appeals. A more frequent experience is the abandonment of a mode of life simply because a certain experience of it has proved its unsatisfactory character. There is, therefore, no ground for the idea—often suggested both by supporters and opponents—that Determinism is inconsistent with conversion or change of character, or even that such change can only take place in consequence of some palpably new feature in the external environment. Change of character, whether gradual or sudden, is as easily explainable on Determinist grounds as continued identity of character. It is not only the outward behaviour that may change, but the character also—in the sense in which we are accustomed to use that word in ordinary life or ethical discussion—though doubtless some characteristics of the man must remain even after the most startling of such changes if he

[1] Of course the repetition is by itself a new feature in the environment. It may very plausibly be suggested that the earlier experiences have already modified the character or (as modern Psychologists say) the 'sub-conscious self,' but these effects may not have risen above the 'threshold of Consciousness.' This principle has been used by Professor James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* to explain the phenomena of religious conversion.

is to remain the same man. Not only his acts, but his motives, his emotions, his principles of action may become quite different from what they were before the hitherto latent capacity of his nature was called into activity. Of course, if by 'character' we choose to understand the whole of man's capacities for reacting to different stimuli[1], the original man with all his possibilities, then it must be admitted that on Determinist principles character is unchangeable. But this is not what we mean by 'character' in ordinary ethical judgements. To maintain that a man gradually or suddenly 'converted' is still a bad man because, but for some change in his circumstances, he would still have been a bad man, is to confound character with some ultimate psychological or metaphysical ground or basis or source of 'character,' true or false. It would be better to say that the 'self' remains the same—identical through differences, the same and yet not the same—though character may change. From the point of view of Ethics real change of character is undoubtedly a fact of experience—one of the facts which each side in the controversy must take as data for the discussion. It is only a very crude Determinism which denies this, and only a very crude or unfair Indeterminist who can suppose that his opponent is logically bound to deny it.

Another unfair mode of statement often adopted by Determinists is to accuse their opponents of admitting the possibility of 'unmotived willing.' The Indeterminist, if he knows how to do justice to his own case, admits that action is always inspired by motives. But it must be conceded on all hands that the 'motive' cannot be identified with some factor in the external environment taken by itself, or even with some imagined object of desire as it would be apart from the individual's reaction upon it. It is unquestionable, not only that in the same external environment two different men will act very differently, but that the same imagined pleasure or pain[2], the same anticipated

[1] The change of stimulus need not always be intellectual, as Schopenhauer assumes when he says 'Repentance never proceeds from a change of the will (which is impossible), but from a change of knowledge' (*The World as Will and Idea*, Eng. Trans., I. p. 382).

[2] It might no doubt be maintained that in strictness it never is the same: it is made different in the two cases by the difference of the psychical context

personal experience or external event, will call forth a very different response in different individuals. Both sides must admit that conscious and deliberate action (we may for convenience here ignore all other kinds of human behaviour) is always instigated by a desire: nor ought there to be any hesitation on either side to admit that it is always the strongest desire that determines action. It need not be the desire which seemed strongest to the man at the moment before he acted; but, when he has acted, that fact shows that the desire which prevailed was the strongest. We have no criterion for estimating the relative strength of conflicting desires except the influence which they exercise upon action. But unquestionably the relative strength of the desire is not due to anything in the desired object (as it is when taken apart from the consciousness of the individual), but to something in the man himself. The question about which the Determinist and the Indeterminist are at issue is precisely this: 'What is it that makes a desired object appeal more strongly to one man than it does to another?' The man always acts in obedience to the strongest motive, but the question remains: 'What is it that determines the greater strength of one desire as compared with another in different individuals?' 'Clearly something in the man himself,' both sides will reply. But to the Determinist that 'something in the man' must mean 'something in the man as he was at the moment before the alternative was presented—something itself the result of his original constitution (material or spiritual) as he was at the moment of birth together with the whole environment of his life up to the moment of action.' To the Indeterminist it will mean 'something which came into existence at that instant, which had never been in existence before, which was not the necessary result of anything that had been in existence before, which could not be inferred by any sagacity from anything that was in the world up to that moment, an absolutely new creation.' The action on this view is due to the man certainly, but not simply to the man as he was born, or even the man as he has made himself by previous acts

in which it stands in the two cases. This is the same thing as saying that a particular 'object of desire' has no existence which is independent of the whole personality of the desiring subject.

of choice, but to the man as he makes himself at that minute. It is this power of making himself anew by successive acts, unfettered even by his previous self, which more than aught else constitutes him (according to the Indeterminist) a moral being. The acts flow from the self, but the self is a self-creative self. Whether such a conception is ultimately intelligible, we shall have hereafter to examine. But that is the fairest way of presenting the Indeterminist case.

The case has so far been stated as though the Libertarian maintained that every act—at least every act of deliberate and reflective choice between alternatives morally significant—were wholly uninfluenced either by original character, by environment, or by previous acts of free choice—that every such act is undetermined and equally undetermined. A position so obviously inconsistent with the most familiar experience has never perhaps been deliberately maintained by any human being, but it must be confessed that till very recently advocates of Indeterminism have taken little pains to protect themselves against such a travesty of their position. A moment's reflection will be enough to show that such a contention would amount to the denial that there is such a thing as character, that there is any permanence or continuity at all about the self to which action is referred. All that the Libertarian is bound to maintain is that these acts of undetermined choice constitute one of the factors which determine the character of the man's life, a factor whose moral significance from the Indeterminist point of view need not be diminished even if it were admitted that—externally considered—it is the smallest of these factors. Ninety-nine hundredths (so to speak) of a man's life might be due to heredity, education, environment, and original constitution; but provided there were a hundredth part referable only to undetermined acts of choice, that would be enough to satisfy the postulate of Freedom. On this view it would be *that* hundredth part—some difference scarcely visible to superficial observation, a little more or a little less of kindliness or family affection in the man whom circumstances have turned into an habitual criminal, a little more or less conscientiousness and self-denial in the man whom circumstances have made respectable—that stamps

him as morally good or bad in the true ethical sense, or at least in the truest sense, of those words. This point of view was once paradoxically expressed by an able advocate of Indeterminism—the late Professor Chandler of Oxford—when he said that it was enough that one act of a man's life should be free. But in truth it is not necessary that even an isolated act should be referable *wholly* to the free will. It would be enough that it should enter as a factor into the determination of a man's acts or some of them, that a man's acts and matured character should be referable not to two factors but to three—birth-character, environment, undetermined choice.

Much confusion has been caused in this matter by the use of the term 'Freedom' in a variety of senses which are not always clearly distinguished from one another by those who use them. In particular the word Freedom has been employed in the following three sharply distinguishable senses:—

(1) Sometimes it means that an act is one done in obedience to Reason or to the higher self: because only in such acts is the agent conscious of no discord between the higher and lower self, because only then is the man's deliberate conviction of what is highest and best for him not dominated and controlled by passing desires, capricious lusts, and fleeting passions. In this sense it is clear that good acts alone are free. The idea that goodness or the service of God is 'perfect freedom' is from a practical point of view an extremely valuable and stimulating idea. But it obviously involves a metaphor, and its introduction into the controversy between Determinism and its opposite has led to endless confusion. The idea is one which, in works of technical Ethics at least, had better be expressed in some other way [1].

[1] This usage is in modern times due to the example of Kant, who regarded every good act as motived by respect for the Moral Law and so as determined by pure Practical Reason; but, since at the same time that act *qua* event was a link in a series of causally inter-connected phenomena, it was really, according to him, not the particular act but the whole series that was determined by a single act of timeless, undetermined choice. In supposing that a man determines his own character by an act of timeless choice, Kant was an Indeterminist. His followers have mostly followed more or less closely his use of the term 'free' in the sense of 'rationally determined,' while dropping the Indeterminist side of his doctrine. Kant's position

(2) Good and bad acts alike may be regarded as free by all who recognize a difference between mechanical causality and the causality of a permanent spiritual self. In this sense Freedom implies the power of self-determination, but does not necessarily involve the existence of undetermined beginnings in the stream of volitions which make up a man's inner life. That Freedom in this sense is an absolutely essential postulate of Morality, I have already insisted in the chapter on 'Metaphysic and Morality.'

(3) Freedom may be used to imply a power of absolutely undetermined choice in the self—a power of originating acts which have absolutely no connexion with or relation to the self as it was before the act.

It is of extreme importance to distinguish the kind of Determinism which recognizes the existence of a spiritual self and refers human actions to the character of that self from the mechanical Necessarianism which regards actions as caused by one another, or by the physical events of which what we call 'actions' are the psychical concomitants. But the ambiguous use of the terms 'free' and 'freedom' has been responsible for vast confusion. Many writers have supposed themselves to be defending

involves the difficulty of applying the category of Causality to something which has no beginning. That which has no beginning cannot be caused by itself or anything else: it can only be uncaused. The only intelligible sense which can be given to the idea of 'noumenal freedom' is to interpret it as meaning that the individual is uncreated, and either 'out of time' or 'pre-existent.' But there seems to be no evidence that that is what Kant intended by it. He probably meant merely that the timeless self is the cause of the series of acts in time. How there can be a timeless individual self which is not also uncreated he did not ask himself. Bad acts were to Kant apparently free in the sense that the rational self could have interfered with the causally determined series of natural events in time, but left them to be determined by motives of pleasure and pain, which Kant always assumed to be the only possible motives of non-moral or immoral acts, and to be of a purely 'natural' character —just like cases of mechanical or physical causality. But the distinction between the first and second senses of the term 'free' is never clearly stated by Kant or by most of his followers. Leibniz has also added much to the confusion by trying to persuade other people, and perhaps himself, that he was an Indeterminist when most of his arguments only go to establish freedom in the second of the senses distinguished in the text.

Indeterminism when they were really Determinists themselves in the sense of Self-Determinism. Still more have been so understood by readers not unwilling to be deceived. St. Thomas Aquinas, and Hegel, and English Idealists like Green have often been taken for Indeterminists or defenders of Free-will in the popular sense. The materialistic, hedonistic, and other misleading associations which have gathered around the word 'Necessity' certainly justify the use of the word Freedom for any doctrine which allows that actions are really determined by a spiritual self capable of being influenced by ethical, as opposed to purely hedonistic, motives. Only, those who avail themselves of this usage should make perfectly plain the sense in which they do so. I shall myself claim the right of using the word 'Freedom' to include belief in 'Self-determination' in a sense which is not inconsistent with one kind of Determinism: but with a view of avoiding ambiguity I shall usually speak of the creed which denies Determinism altogether as 'Indeterminism.' The word Libertarianism is also so definitely associated with Free-will in the indeterministic or popular sense that it had better be allowed to remain synonymous with Indeterminism, even by those who give a wider significance to the term 'free.'

II

Having thus tried to make plain the nature of the question, I shall proceed to glance at the arguments used on both sides. At different periods in the history of thought different lines of argument have played the largest part in the controversy. Putting aside the ancient world, which, even in the Stoic-epicurean period, was, perhaps, hardly alive to the real difficulties of the problem, we may say that the controversy has passed through three stages. In the earlier stage it was primarily a theological controversy: the difficulty was to reconcile the Freedom which Morality *prima facie* seemed to require with the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God: and at this stage it may be observed that it was generally the more emancipated or Humanist thinkers who defended the cause of Freedom, while it was the more enthusiastic representatives of authoritative

Religion who took the deterministic side. The philosophically educated Greek Fathers were on the side of Liberty [1]: the half-cultured Africans and other Westerns on the side of Predestination. St. Thomas in a slightly disguised form, Wycliffe and Huss avowedly, were Determinists of the Self-determinist type: the critical and sceptical Occam was a Libertarian. Luther and the Reformation Theologians were Predestinarians: Erasmus and the champions of Humanism were Indeterminists. In the second stage of the controversy the arena was chiefly metaphysical. The difficulty was to reconcile moral Freedom with the idea of Causality and the universality of Law. From the time of Hobbes it may broadly be said (subject no doubt to many exceptions and reservations) that the sceptical intellect has been on the side of Determinism, while the champions of Religion and Morality have usually been the upholders of Indeterminism. If among the Philosophers as many great names can be claimed for some form of Indeterminism as for Determinism, their advocacy has been for the most part based wholly and avowedly upon ethical grounds. In recent times, while the old difficulties continue to play their part in the controversy, the most powerful impulse towards the deterministic mode of thought has been derived not so much from *a priori* metaphysical difficulties as from empirical considerations—from the discovery of the close connexion between capacity and temperament on the one hand and the structure of brain and nervous system on the other, from the emphasis which modern Evolutionism has given to the always familiar influence of heredity, from the constancy of statistics, and in general the more vivid appreciation of the intimate relation in which individual conduct stands to social environment.

I will postpone for the moment any further exposition of the speculative difficulties (which perhaps after all remain the most formidable), but will add for the benefit of readers who may be very unfamiliar with the controversy a few words as to the way in which these empirical considerations have tended to bring about a state of things in which, if common sense has not given up its

[1] Only later Greek Philosophy and Theology invented a word for 'free-will'—an idea which Aristotle never succeeded in expressing—*αὐτεξουσία*.

instinctive Indeterminism, the prevailing tendency both of Science and Philosophy is towards the deterministic view of the question.

(1) Without exaggerating the extent of our knowledge as to the relation between mind and brain, it is a well-ascertained fact that there is some correspondence between the shape, structure, or quality of the brain and nervous system on the one hand and the character and conduct of the man on the other. With regard to purely intellectual characteristics this will hardly be disputed by any one, and it can hardly be denied that this is to some extent the case with moral characteristics also. Southern Italians and Spaniards are usually more irascible, emotional, and impetuous than Englishmen or Scandinavians, not because they all happen to use their freedom in that way, but because they are born with a different cerebral and nervous constitution. It will be said (and justly), that we have to do here with the emotional or pathological constitution of different individuals, and not with their moral character proper—with the impulses which excite them to good actions or bad and not with their actual conduct. But we observe also that on the average the resulting conduct of the respective races is what might be expected from this difference in their emotional tendencies, and it is easy to infer that further knowledge of such physiological facts might explain the actual volitions as well as the impulses against which the inmost self of each individual reacts—the extent to which he yields to his good or bad impulses as well as the nature of those impulses themselves. As the physical difference between races becomes wider, moral differences widen also. We should be almost as surprised to find the moral qualities of a Kant or a Gladstone as we should be to find the intellectual powers of such men in combination with the physical characteristics of a Toda. And when we turn to the widest moral differences between men of the same race, the same correspondence between character and physique is traceable to a greater or less extent. No one now doubts that insanity is due to a disease or original malformation of the brain and nervous system—a disease sometimes engendered, and to some extent curable, by purely spiritual influences, but nevertheless a physical disease when once produced, and one often traceable to purely physical causes. And insanity reveals itself

in erratic morality as well as in erroneous judgements about matters of fact. The influence of brain upon character is seen most conspicuously in those cases where a physical injury—a blow on the head or a sunstroke—is followed by violent or criminal behaviour in persons of previously irreproachable character. It is probable that Lombroso and his followers have failed to establish their theory of a 'criminal type' of head; there is, at least, much exaggeration about the definiteness and certainty of their results: but it cannot be denied that a majority of criminals—at least, criminals of the kind who usually find their way to penal servitude—are persons of exceedingly low mental calibre with a low facial angle and the cast of features which commonly accompanies very low mental development. In these exceptional and abnormal instances the correspondence between character and constitution becomes so glaring that it is hardly possible to avoid the recognition of some causal connexion in that sense of the word in which we usually speak of causal connexion in the physical Sciences[1]: and it is at least plausible to argue that further knowledge would reveal a like correspondence in the case of those less glaring differences of character and conduct which the Libertarian refers to the free will of the agent. It must be remembered, indeed, that all this evidence is quite inadequate to prove that purely physical characteristics are the *sole* cause of intellectual and moral characteristics, but it tends to show that these physical characteristics must be included among the antecedents of human actions, and to suggest that, if not wholly determined by physical causes, they are at least determined by causes.

(2) There are the familiar facts of heredity, emphasized by modern biological investigation, but not really much better known

[1] We have no experience of brain by itself: it is always brain *plus* something which is not brain with which we have to do, and it must, of course, be remembered that when he treats brain as a cause, the Idealist does so only in a relative and not an ultimate sense, since the brain itself exists only for mind. But the question of the relation between mind and body does not fall within our subject. No view of it is inconsistent with the position taken up in this chapter provided that it admits (1) the real causality of the individual self, (2) the spiritual character of Ultimate Reality.

to us than to those who lived before Darwinism and the ideas associated with it were dreamed of. The hastiest empirical observation taught men that people had a tendency to resemble—not only in their mental but in their moral characteristics—one or both of their parents:

> Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis:
> est in iuvencis, est in equis patrum
> virtus, neque imbellem feroces
> progenerant aquilae columbam[1].

Observation a little more extended and careful taught them that, even when there is a glaring contrast between child and both parents, a resemblance may often be traced between the character of the child and some remoter ancestor or collateral relative. The observation of this familiar fact is by itself fatal to the crude Libertarianism (if such has ever really been maintained) which represents each act of every individual as wholly and equally due to the use which he makes of his free will; and it is at least plausible here again to use the argument from analogy, and to contend that, had we full and adequate knowledge of the causes which determine the course of embryonic development, we should be able to account for the original constitution with which a man is born into the world in those cases in which the earliest manifestations of character are *prima facie* least like what we should have expected as easily as we do in those cases in which they most obviously recall the parental type. Just as the generalizations which have enabled meteorologists to make rough predictions with regard to the weather have, in spite of many inaccuracies and some total mistakes, convinced the general public that there is such a Science as Meteorology, so it may be contended that a man's birth-character could with adequate knowledge of data and laws be predicted with as much certainty as the weather: and that by the birth-character is explainable everything in the man's conduct that is not due to his social and other environment.

(3) There is the argument from statistics. Though we can seldom obtain sufficient knowledge of the individual's character to enable us to predict with great certainty and accuracy how

[1] Horace, *Odes* iv. 4. 29-32.

he will act, we are in many cases able to foretell the action of masses of men not only with certainty but with a high degree of quantitative accuracy. We can be tolerably sure, indeed, that some individuals will be late for dinner, but we cannot say to a minute or two how much, and such calculations are always liable to be upset by disturbing causes: the most unpunctual of men may be in time when his watch goes wrong. But with masses of men it is otherwise; we are able by the examination of the statistics to predict with a very small margin of error how many people in London will commit suicide in a year. If one country shows a higher rate of suicide than another, we seek to account for it by something in its social conditions, as for instance by its Religion being Protestant rather than Roman Catholic, or by the cruelties connected with its system of compulsory military service, or by the prevalence of Landlordism instead of peasant Proprietorship. And fluctuations in the statistics we try to account for in a similar way. Within small areas or periods the fluctuations are of course considerable. They become smaller as we extend our view to larger areas of time and place. Or, if a sudden variation occurs, the instinct of every man—be he Determinist or Libertarian—is to account for it by some change in the environment; and in many cases we can so account for the sudden or gradual variations of statistics of this kind with at least as much success as we meet with in the attempt to account for variations in the statistics of death or disease, which everybody admits to be due to fixed, ascertainable, and calculable causes [1]. If we find a sudden increase in the number of offences punishable on summary conviction at a particular date, we ask ourselves whether any legislative or social change took place at the time, and we find it in the growth of bicycling and the consequent necessity for the prosecution of highly respectable persons for riding upon footpaths. If the statistics of desertion in the English Army show a rapid and startling change in a certain year, we are not satisfied with accounting for it by a freak of Free-will, and find it more satis-

[1] Even Insurance statistics involve the assumption that we can to a large extent predict human conduct. An uncaused outbreak of murder on a large scale might involve the winding-up of the safest company in Europe.

factory to connect it with some change in the manner of dealing with such offences or with the state of the labour market. Moral statistics in short—statistics of crime or pauperism for instance—are almost as constant as vital statistics. The conduct of men in masses can be predicted with more certainty than the weather. How can this fact, it may be asked, be reconciled with the hypothesis of Indeterminism? Upon that hypothesis, it may be urged, we ought to regard it as quite conceivable that in one year vast numbers should freely will to commit larceny, in the next year none at all.

It may be suggested that on the doctrine of probabilities the number of undetermined bad volitions might be supposed, in the absence of disturbing circumstances, on an average to bear about the same proportion to the number of undetermined good ones, though it will always be uncertain upon which particular persons it falls to keep up the average. But the doctrine of probabilities is itself based upon degrees in our knowledge of causes; and the question arises whether, in regard to any class of phenomena not governed by causes[1], we should have any rational ground for expecting such a constancy of averages. The idea of pure chance, understood as a matter of objective fact, is open to exactly the same difficulties as the idea of undetermined volition. To refer the constancy of statistics to the operation of chance is therefore no explanation of their approximate constancy. It is quite true that the explanation of moral statistics by social causes taken in connexion with the original constitution of individuals is not made out with sufficient completeness to constitute positive proof; but it can hardly be denied

[1] I do not identify the law of Causality with the law of the Uniformity of Nature. But our belief in the universal prevalence of Uniformity within the mechanical sphere is itself based upon a probable inference as to the *modus operandi* of the ultimate Cause which logically presupposes that the events must have some Cause. We assume *a priori* that events must have some cause: we learn by experience that the cause is one which operates within a certain sphere in accordance with a mechanical 'uniformity of succession,' and even in the biological sphere with a certain regularity which, however, cannot be reduced to a mechanical 'uniformity of succession.' For further explanation of my meaning I may refer to Mr. R. B. Haldane's *Pathway to Reality*, Vol. I, p. 240 sq., and Dr. J. S. Haldane's two Guy's Hospital lectures on *Life and Mechanism*.

that the whole of our information points to the conclusion that with complete knowledge we should be able to see an exact correspondence as clearly as we now see a rough correspondence.

In the present state of our knowledge it might safely be affirmed that, while unreflective common sense may retain its instinctive Indeterminism, such a theory would never even occur to a scientifically trained mind acquainted with such facts as I have mentioned and accustomed to deal with social and psychological phenomena, unless it were in the first instance suggested by ethical or religious considerations. The most important question to be discussed is, therefore, the question whether any demand of the moral and religious consciousness really necessitates, or even strongly recommends, the theory of Indeterminism. Our knowledge of the empirical facts is far too small to enable us to say that, if it were so recommended, the hypothesis would be indefensible. If we could not explain or justify the facts of our moral consciousness without this hypothesis, we should have as good a right to assume Indeterminism as we have to accept any other postulate which is required for the rational interpretation of our experience. The facts of our moral consciousness are as certain as any other facts, and logical inferences from or implications of those facts have as good a right to be believed as any isolated fact accessible to immediate experience. There would still remain, indeed, the speculative question which we have hitherto waived—whether the very idea of undetermined choice is really thinkable; but, if we found it impossible to understand or explain an important department of our thought without such an hypothesis, it might well be urged that any logical or metaphysical presuppositions which stand in the way of doing so would stand in need of re-examination and revision. We might even feel driven to acquiesce for the nonce in an unresolvable contradiction between two sides or elements in our knowledge and experience. Such an admission of irresolvable antinomies would be a far more rational proceeding than to dismiss as fictitious the intellectual implications of one part of our experience because we cannot at present reconcile them with those of some other part, even without taking into consideration the greater importance for practical

life of the moral as compared with the scientific side of our conscious life. The question before us is then this—Does Morality postulate Indeterminism?

III

The best way of raising the question will be, I think, to state as clearly as possible the position of those who assert the necessity of Indeterminism for Morality in the most extreme form. They do not deny that men are born with natural tendencies to good or evil, or that such tendencies are modified by education and environment, physical and social. And these inborn or acquired tendencies exercise an influence upon their actual conduct. But, in pronouncing a man good or bad, we must, it is contended, make abstraction of all that is due either to original endowment or to subsequent environment. It is not these things that make a man good or bad, but only that portion of his actual conduct and character which can be traced to the use that he makes of his own free will. It is only that part of a man's conduct which (his original nature and all surrounding circumstances being the same) might still have been different, that stamps the man as good or bad in the true, moral sense of the word. No doubt a man who is born so that he cannot fail, with such and such a social environment, to turn out what is commonly called a good man, is a more desirable citizen, more useful to his fellows and more at peace with himself, than one so constituted as, under like circumstances, to turn out a ruffian: but, morally speaking, he is not one whit the better man. We may bestow upon him a utilitarian, a social, perhaps a kind of aesthetic approbation: but to strictly moral approbation he is no more entitled than a clock which keeps time or an animal whose physiological constitution forbids it to indulge in aggressive or predatory behaviour. It is not only that the man's actions are materially correct; they may be done from the right motives —from motives of humanity, of charity, of duty—and yet they are morally worthless, so long as these sentiments are due to his original nature or his fortunate surroundings. It is not only, be it observed, the man of natural good tendencies who is pronounced to be destitute of moral worth if his actions are not

free; every moral system must recognize some difference (what difference will depend upon the system) between the man of natural good qualities and the man who is good on principle—between (for instance) natural good nature and a hot temper duly controlled: and it may conceivably be contended that the latter represents the higher type of character. But this is not all. The extreme Libertarian is prepared to maintain not only that a man's natural sentiments, desires, inclinations may be of the best possible quality, but that his will may be steadily directed, in the presence of the fiercest temptations, towards the good for its own sake; and yet that, if that will be itself the outcome of birth and education, it possesses no moral value whatever. It earns no merit; and, according to this School, moral value and merit are synonymous terms. The determined saint is no better than the determined sinner.

Now it will, I think, be easy to show that, stated in this extreme form, the Libertarian position is totally at variance with the deepest moral convictions and the clearest of moral intuitions. Granted, for the moment, that there is such a thing as undetermined choice, and that for certain purposes—in order to pronounce our final judgement upon a man—it may be necessary to take into consideration, not merely the character of his volitions but also the extent to which his will was undetermined; yet it is certain that we do not attribute *exclusive* moral value to that part of a man's character which would have been the same, no matter what his original character and his subsequent environment. Supposing I meet with a man of whose antecedents I know nothing, but whom I find spending his life in the practice of every virtue under the sun. He not merely does virtuous actions, actions externally in accordance with the Moral Law, but he does them from the highest motives: he is conscientious, charitable, self-denying, free (*quantum humanae potest fragilitati*) from any vices that the most intimate acquaintance can discern. But one day he tells me his history. His father and mother belonged, it appears, to the salt of the earth: he can point back to a long line of equally exemplary ancestors; no member of his family, for generations back, is known to have been selfish or unconscientious: he has enjoyed the best of educations, and been fortunate in his teachers, his

friends, and his professional associates. Now I do not deny that a knowledge of these facts may somewhat weaken my admiration for his character. They may suggest, not only that under less favourable circumstances he might have acted differently, but that his will is really not so strong as it appears to be: that he would not be able to resist stronger temptations than those which have fallen to his lot, and that a less 'sheltered' life might even now produce a serious lowering of his moral level, and reveal the existence of faults hitherto unsuspected by himself or by others. But if I were sure that his will would now be proof against the strongest temptations, the mere knowledge that, without that excellent ancestry and education, his will would have been different would produce surely not the smallest lowering of my moral esteem. A virtuous family commands my respect no less than a virtuous individual. Certainly, the Philosopher who proposes to base his Indeterminism upon the spontaneous deliverances of the unsophisticated moral consciousness will find it difficult to support the contention that in the case contemplated our esteem would be turned into total indifference or contempt. Or take another case—the case of 'conversion.' I have already protested against the notion that Determinism is inconsistent with change of character. As a matter of fact the greatest believers in conversion have been Determinists—St. Augustine, Wycliffe, the Reformers (of every school), the Jansenists, the English Puritans [1]. There may indeed be cases of conversion, as I have already suggested, in which no great visible change of environment accounts for the moral revolution. But that is not the common type. The change usually connects itself either with some striking event in the man's personal history—an escape from great danger, an illness, or a bereavement, or, more commonly still, with the influence of another person brought to bear upon him through a sermon, a book, or private intercourse. Suppose then I meet with another char-

[1] The Methodist movement, or rather one half of it—the section which followed Wesley and not Whitefield—was the first great religious revival that was based on a Libertarian Theology. Perhaps we ought to add that the Franciscan Theology, though its origin is later than the great missionary successes of the movement, was Libertarian.

acter such as I have already contemplated, but find on enquiry that in this case the man has not always been so. He used to be a selfish and self-indulgent profligate, and (as he will tell you himself) would doubtless have continued so but for the fact that on such an occasion he listened to the sermon of such and such a preacher, came into intimate relations with such and such a friend, or chanced to peruse such and such a book. Since then not merely his outward life but the inner life of his soul has been altogether different. Am I then, in estimating his real character, to make abstraction of all that has been due to that externally conditioned crisis in his life, and say that his true moral status is just what it would have been, had some accident stood in the way of his hearing the preacher or falling in with the friend or the book? It is true no doubt that the fact that, when he does hear, he hearkens and heeds—that the seed sown is not carried away by the fowls of the air or withered by the stony ground of his heart or choked by the growth of tares—does show that even before that event he was not altogether the frivolous being that he seemed. There were potentialities of goodness in him already; but there will be an end of all possibility (even for the profoundest insight) of classifying men into good and bad, better or worse, if possibilities are to be treated as of the same moral value as actualities. If that were so, what would be the use of preaching or other efforts to make men better? If the possibilities are to be counted for righteousness, why try to develope them into actualities? It may be admitted also, without any undue suspiciousness as to the value of religious conversion, that the tendencies which previous to the moral crisis were dominant and unchecked very often prove to have been less entirely eradicated than the stock phraseology of revivalist movements may sometimes suggest. In the language of a dogmatic formula the old 'infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated,' and its influence may sometimes be traced in altered forms throughout the man's subsequent life. But the position that the true moral status of the man is really what to a discriminating moral vision it would have appeared to be, had his old and bad mode of life continued unaltered, is assuredly not one which can base itself upon the

ordinary judgements of mankind. The only really logical form of such extreme Indeterminism would carry with it (as it did avowedly for Kant) the startling consequence that no man can really be made better by the influence of another. A mode of thinking which compels us to deny the sanctity of St. Paul because it might never have existed but for the influence of Christ, of St. Augustine because it would not have existed but for St. Ambrose, of St. Francis because he was once a profligate, or of his own disciples because without him they would in all probability never have risen above the low average level of their contemporaries, is more flatly opposed to the deepest moral convictions of mankind than the crudest and most mechanical theory of human conduct by which Determinism has ever been caricatured.

Equally startling deductions might be arrived at if we were to invert this line of argument, and to trace out the consequences of treating as really good all the people who under favourable collocations of circumstances might have become good. At that rate all the bad men who failed to become good, because the preacher who might have converted them did not happen to come their way, would have to be set down as paragons of Virtue. And on this mode of thinking the question might be raised where we are to discover men really bad. There are some personalities of such transcendent spiritual energy that it seems scarcely possible, given circumstances under which their influence could have a maximum play, for any human being altogether to resist that influence—assuming that it was brought to bear upon them at a sufficiently early age and that there were no counteracting influences. Granted that there are a small minority on whom no good influence could have any effect, it must be remembered that present environment is not the only factor of which the view under examination would compel us to make abstraction. The influence of heredity must be eliminated also. And how many of the actually bad would have been bad if they had enjoyed the advantage not only of the education best calculated to develope their possibilities of good but also of the best possible parents and ancestors for many generations? Even if there were any meaning in such a question, it is obvious that

the enquiry into any particular person's 'real character' becomes one with which not only the most profound and trained insight of the 'disinterested spectator,' but even the most penetrating self-examination, is quite incapable of grappling. Indeed, if we push the argument far enough, we might even have to go the length of denying that the moral value of a man was greater than that of an animal in so far as his evolution from the animal condition was due to influences independent of his own undetermined choice.

These considerations do not by themselves disprove Indeterminism. But they do show, I submit, that Indeterminism of this extreme type can gain no support from the 'common-sense Morality to which it generally appeals. They do show that the element in a man's character and conduct which is due to undetermined choice (if any such element exists) cannot without paradox be regarded as the only element which possesses not merely value but that particular kind or degree of value which we are in the habit of bestowing upon a good character or a good will. Granted that an inmost kernel of undetermined choice exists, it is something which is wholly inaccessible to human observation. Granted that the significance of this fact be admitted, and the inference drawn that in the last resort we have no materials for a final and adequate pronouncement upon the total character of any man, still that is a very different thing from saying that those elements of character which are accessible to observation have no value at all in so far as they are due to anything else but this hypothetical element of undetermined choice, the existence of which in any particular person we have no data even for conjecturing. Such a contention would carry with it the consequence not only that our estimates of character—our own or other people's—are often erroneous and always inadequate, but that they bear no relation whatever to the realities of the case. In venerating the saint, we may mistakenly be venerating a bad man to whom a good father and favourable circumstances may have given a benevolence and a self-denial which are morally worthless because 'determined.' In morally condemning a Caesar Borgia, we may be condemning actual bad tendencies which are no more deserving of moral censure

than physical disease, while all the time acts of Free-will sufficient under favourable circumstances to have made a Socrates or a St. Paul were wholly prevented from taking actual effect because the poor man chanced to be the illegitimate son of a Renaissance Pope, and to have breathed the most polluted moral atmosphere that social evolution has ever generated. If such extravagances are to be avoided, we must at the least admit that besides this inaccessible kernel of character the actual character and volitions of human beings, as they stand revealed directly to introspection or indirectly to observation, have a real value, and a very different value from that attributed to the hedonistic or other consequences which character and volition may produce for the persons themselves or for others. Granted that the undetermined choice may possess moral value—it may be supreme and unique moral value—it is not the only thing which possesses such value. We can no longer say that in a determined world there would be no such thing as value or moral value, and consequently no such thing as Morality. Granted the existence of some higher sphere of transcendental Morality for which Indeterminism may be a necessary postulate, we cannot say that without it our ordinary moral judgements would be destitute of all meaning and significance.

Now, if this much be admitted, it is obvious that the argument for Indeterminism as a postulate of Morality is at least very seriously weakened. The strength of the case for Indeterminism lies in its appeal to common sense: that case is therefore enormously weakened when it is found that its logical consequences are such as to shock common sense and that, to become capable of rational defence, it has to assume a form which common sense would not recognize. We have seen that, unless we are to substitute for the moral judgements of our ordinary moral consciousness a kind of moral judgement the very existence of which has never been suspected except by a few Indeterminist Philosophers, we cannot say that Morality would be destroyed by the admission that this element of undetermined choice does not exist at all. Morality would still remain: our judgements of value would remain, and there would be no reason for denying

their validity. We should retain our conception of 'the good,' and should still ascribe a peculiar value to acts voluntarily directed towards the good. Morality would not be destroyed; would it in any way be weakened? The suggestion that it would, might mean one of two things: either it might mean that the validity of the Moral Law would be affected for the reflective consciousness, or that in practice a general conviction that Determinism is true would bring with it some weakening of the motives which work for Morality and deter from Immorality.

Let us assume then that we knew for certain Determinism to be true. Ought that logically to make, and would it practically make, any difference to us? First, let us get rid of some misleading associations. In the first place, Determinism does not imply psychological Hedonism, though psychological Hedonism does imply Determinism. The 'motives' which determine conduct may be of the most unhedonistic or rational or spiritual character. It is a mistake to assume (with Kant) that, because a motive is 'pure'—a pure desire to obey the Moral Law—the resulting act can be due to nothing but undetermined choice, or that because the act is determined its motive must be purely 'natural.' The fact that, with sufficient knowledge of a man's character and of the spiritual dynamic possessed by a given sermon, we could predict that he would be converted by it, does not show that the operation of the sermon was due to self-interest. Secondly, Determinism does not imply any particular theory as to the relations between mind and body. There can be no doubt that certain features of physical constitution are among the causes or conditions which determine character and conduct, but these need not be the only ones. *Prima facie*, and without any attempt to offer a complete solution of the problem, the influence of mind upon body is at least as obvious a fact of experience as the influence of body upon mind. A blow on the head may be the new factor which turns a man of given physical and mental constitution into a criminal. But it is equally certain that a thought may cause blushing or death, that cheerful society aids digestion, and that elevating spiritual influences will alter the whole expression of a man's face. It is possible

that there may be the same mental interaction or concomitance between the, at present, unconscious soul and physical facts even in embryonic life. But, whatever may be thought of such a suggestion, it is enough here to say that Determinism postulates nothing as to the nature of the 'original constitution' which, in conjunction with environment, determines the bent of a man's character and actions. It merely asserts that, given a certain original constitution of mind and body, whatever is not due to the environment is due to that original constitution. And, thirdly, it must be remembered that in asserting that a man's acts are caused, we do not say that they are caused in the same way and sense in which mechanical events are caused by one another. It is totally misleading to assume that a man's acts in the present are determined by his past acts, just as the motions of a billiard-ball at a given moment are determined by its past movements. It may be true that rough predictions as to a man's future conduct may be made on the basis of past acts, but these past acts never reveal the whole of the man's character. The act is not caused by previous acts, but by the same self which caused the previous acts[1]. And the way in which a self causes is quite different from the way in which mechanical events cause one another. It is possible (and I for one should maintain) that even in mechanical action the real and ultimate cause of the event is not the previous event or any mysterious necessity of thought which requires that like physical antecedents should have like physical consequents, but the Will of God which within the region of Mechanics works invariably (we have every reason to believe) according to this law of uniform succession. But I am not writing a treatise on Causality, and it is enough to say that the causality of motives is in most important respects a very different thing from the causality which in the ordinary language of Physical Science is attributed to events. The self is not an event or a series of events. The desires, emotions, and other

[1] That the idea has arisen from a completely unjustified application to the relation between successive acts of the idea of mathematical necessity has been admirably shown by M. Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la Conscience*, p. 158 sq., though I cannot accept all his views which seem to involve actual Indeterminism.

psychical influences which are said to move the self have no existence of their own apart from the self. The self is present in each of them, and makes them what they are. Moreover, even if we regard the desires or inclinations which successively enter into the consciousness of the self as causes which determine its successive volitions, these are not mere events which act on succeeding events as it were *a tergo*, but presented objects which influence the self after the manner of final causes. In Mechanics the present is determined by the past: in the region of human action it is in a sense the future which determines the present.

It is true that for the future to determine the present, that future must become an idea in the present[1]. But the causality of ideas—ideas inaccessible to psychical observation—is a very different thing from the causality of physical events. And after all the idea does not produce the consequent by itself—in isolation from the whole nature of the self for which it is an idea; we say, no doubt, that the idea acts upon the will and thereby causes the resulting action, but it would be just as true to say that the will acts upon the idea. The act results not

[1] By this I do not mean to deny that in animal or even vegetable organisms, or again in unreflecting human behaviour, final causes may not operate without being present in consciousness. But this implies that there must already be a striving or tendency towards this end, even though it is not a conscious striving. The postulate of the 'Uniformity of Nature,' as we use it in the purely Physical Sciences, is precisely the assumption that we may exclude all conditions except antecedent *physical conditions*. A striving which is not yet revealed either in consciousness or in any physical change is, even more than a fact of consciousness, something very different from the 'conditions' of which Physical Science takes account. I should venture to add further that, though this causality of ends should not be spoken of as something miraculous or outside the laws of nature (as long as we avoid the assumption that mechanical 'uniformity of succession' is the only kind of natural law), the causality of an end not present to the individual consciousness seems to me ultimately intelligible only on the supposition that it is already present to the divine consciousness. The views on Causality with which I am most in sympathy are to be found in Professor James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, especially I. p. 108 sq., II. 189 sq. See also Professor Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics*, Book IV, chap. iv, and the works mentioned above, p. 316, *note*. I have dealt with the subject somewhat more at length in an Address to the Aristotelian Society on 'Causality and the Principles of Historical Evidence' (1906).

merely from the idea which occupied the mind the moment before, but from the whole state of the man, and the man is not merely a knowing and feeling but a striving being[1]. Much of the dislike commonly felt for deterministic modes of thought arises from the use by Determinists of expressions which suggest that the man himself is simply the theatre upon which a certain action and reaction between ideas take place, an action and reaction of which he—the man himself—is the passive victim. But Determinism is not at all bound up with the mode of thought which denies real causality or activity to the self: on the contrary some Determinists would contend that there is no real causality in anything but a self or a spirit, and that when we say that this or that physical or psychical event causes another such event, we are really describing merely the mode or order in which some conscious will acts; so that, when such events are not determined by some human or similarly limited will, they must be really willed by God. But confining ourselves to the case of the human will, we may say that the very essence of the Self-determinist's case is that it is the real nature of the self (as modified by its environment) which determines of what sort its successive acts shall be. It is not because I have acted in a certain way in the past that I am necessitated to act in a certain way in the future, but because I am at this moment the sort of spiritual being to whom such and such an enjoyment, such and such a reform in my society, such and such a moral ideal presents itself as attractive.

Now let us assume that we have accepted Determinism in the 'Self-determinist' sense: what ethical consequences will such an acceptance involve? It will not destroy the meaning or validity of my judgements of value: that is a suggestion which we have already dismissed. Voluntary acts (in any sense of 'voluntary') are not the only things which possess value. Hurricanes and

[1] 'C'est donc une psychologie grossière, dupe du langage, que celle qui nous montre l'âme déterminée par une sympathie, une aversion ou une haine, comme par autant de forces qui pèsent sur elle. Ces sentiments, pourvu qu'ils aient atteint une profondeur suffisante, représentent chacun l'âme entière, en ce sens que tout le contenu de l'âme se reflète en chacun d'eux. Dire que l'âme se détermine sous l'influence de l'un quelconque de ces sentiments, c'est donc reconnaître qu'elle se détermine elle-même.' Bergson, *lib. cit.*, p. 126.

eruptions are bad—that is to say, the suffering they cause in conscious beings is bad; and it is not the less bad because it is not due to human volition. Knowledge is good and a very much better thing than sensual pleasure, though nobody asserts that stupidity is due to Free-will or denies that ignorance is due to many causes besides lack of goodwill. And as knowledge has a higher value than mere pleasure, so a benevolent act or a benevolent character has a higher value still. That value of act or character is no doubt dependent on the fact that the particular act is willed, and character means the whole sum of psychical forces which produces a tendency to voluntary action of a certain kind: the difference between a crime and a disease is exactly the same for the Determinist as it is for the Indeterminist. The difference lies just in the fact that a better will would have prevented the one, while it could not have prevented the other. We cannot prove of course that there is this superior value in voluntary good conduct. It is an immediate affirmation of the moral consciousness. If the Indeterminist chooses to dispute this, it is he and not his opponent who is indulging in ethical scepticism, and contradicting the verdict of his own moral consciousness. If he likes to say that the same moral consciousness which assures him that his acts have value tells him also that these morally estimable acts are undetermined, the reply is that this apparently immediate affirmation of consciousness generally disappears for those who understand the nature of the question; and that even Indeterminists fail (as I have endeavoured to show) to carry their theory to its logical consequences, and to withhold all moral approbation from that enormous proportion of human conduct and character which is obviously not due to the alleged undetermined choice of the individual will. At all events, I can only say for myself that, while I am conscious of the immediate judgement or intuition that a charitable act has value and a much greater value than a good dinner, I have no such immediate intuition that the charitable act was an undetermined act, nor can I by any analysis whatever discern the slightest logical or psychological connexion between the two propositions[1]. If judgements of

[1] I have against me the high authority of the late Professor Sidgwick, who

value are not to be trusted, then the whole basis of indeterministic Morality disappears as well as that of deterministic Morality. If they are valid, their validity cannot be upset by any theory as to how the moral act or immoral act came to be done. An act inspired by such and such a character is good, no matter what be the historical explanation of the genesis of such a character.

IV

The denial of Indeterminism then does not affect the logical or metaphysical validity of our value-judgements. Neither need it, so far as I can discover, psychologically have any effect in undermining any possible motives that may impel me to perform acts which my moral consciousness recognizes as good or to abstain from the contrary acts. Determinism is not Fatalism. The Fatalist (in so far as so confused a belief admits of analysis) believes that he is preordained to perform certain acts or that certain events are preordained to happen, no matter how much he may struggle against them. The Turk, we are sometimes assured, will sit down and calmly watch his house burn without making any effort to extinguish the fire, because, if it is the will of Allah that it shall be burned down, it is of no use for him to struggle against it; while, if Allah wills that it shall be saved, Allah does not want his assistance. What the rational Determinist tells him is that the question whether the fire is extinguished or not will depend (in part) upon the question whether he brings a hose to bear upon it or not: and that depends upon what sort of man he is. If he is an active and energetic sort of person with a strong desire to save his house, he will certainly make the effort, and the amount of the effort will depend upon the strength of his desire. No doubt it is impossible to deny that mental confusion, such as is implied in Fatalism or misunderstood Determinism, is sometimes a cause of inertia or other moral obliquity. But so may all sorts of true ideas—the goodness of God, the

attributed great weight as an argument for Indeterminism to the 'immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action' (*Methods of Ethics*, Bk. I, chap. v, § 3). I can only say that I never was strongly conscious of this 'affirmation of consciousness' in my own case, even when I thought that Morality, or at all events Religion, postulated Indeterminism.

possibility of forgiveness, the discovery that there is a 'soul of goodness in things evil'—be abused to justify and encourage indulgence in wrongdoing to which people are already inclined. What is denied is that there is anything logical or rational about such arguments. If I have a real desire to be better, that will and must influence my conduct: how much it will influence it, depends upon the strength of that good desire relatively to other desires and impulses. If on account of my discovery that I owe this good desire to my parents or my education I abandon the effort to be better, that shows that there could never have been any very earnest desire to be better, but only perhaps a desire to escape punishment, or at best some form of self-reproach, which I have persuaded myself would no longer be deserved if my evil tendencies could be shown to be determined. If it be true that the value of good character and conduct is not really affected by the question of its genesis, it is impossible that, except under the influence of intellectual confusion, any doctrine as to that genesis could destroy or weaken any reason for moral effort which I can possibly give to myself or urge upon another.

Not only cannot the theory of Determinism weaken any of the influences which make for Morality in the world: it cannot even affect the character of that Morality. There is, indeed, one particular branch of Morality which may perhaps be supposed to be so influenced. The disappearance of the idea that a man's moral worth is (at least in the highest and fullest sense of the word) dependent upon the use which he makes of his power of undetermined choice may introduce a certain change into our ideas of merit and demerit. But we have already discovered that the amount of a man's action which is really due to this power of undetermined choice cannot be even roughly and approximately ascertained. The man who is the maker of his own virtue (as it were) and the man whose virtue is due to the psycho-physical law which has caused him to reproduce the character of some remote ancestor behave (it may be admitted) exactly alike: their internal impulses, desires, emotions, and so on exhibit even to the closest introspection—still more to another person—not the smallest difference. Hence a standard

of 'merit' based upon the theory which pronounces the one kind of Virtue to be of the highest value and the other of no value at all must be entirely unavailable for the guidance of human conduct—for the distribution of praise and blame, reward and punishment, even of self-approval and self-condemnation. How far the idea of merit and demerit is really (apart from the question of its practical availability) based upon the theory of Indeterminism, will depend in part upon the question whether we were right in the interpretation which we gave to that notion in our chapters on 'Justice' and 'The Theory of Punishment.' The notion of merit in so far as it does not involve the retributive view of punishment in no way presupposes the theory of Indeterminism.

But the mention of punishment brings me to another form of the ethical objection to Determinism. It is said that that doctrine can give no meaning to the idea of remorse or repentance or to the idea of responsibility. First, as to the idea of remorse. It is probable that the acceptance of Indeterminism may introduce a slight psychological difference into this feeling, or rather into the way in which the individual articulately formulates the state of his consciousness in moments of remorse and repentance. It is probable that the common-sense person who has more or less consciously and deliberately adopted a theory of philosophical Indeterminism may sometimes say to himself, 'My Ego was the sole cause of that wrong action, and my Ego as it was simply at the moment of action. No matter how I was born, no matter what my education, no matter how I may have acted previously, no matter what I was at nine o'clock that morning, the sin that I committed at ten o'clock might perfectly well not have occurred.' Such a view of the facts must be admitted to be on determinist principles a delusion. But it may be doubted what (apart from such confusions as have already been exposed) is the real moral value of that conviction. It is not the conviction that his previous self had nothing to do with the act that inspires remorse, but the fact that his present self abhors it. The man who repents of the act is a man in whom *ex hypothesi* good and bad impulses are struggling for the mastery, or in whom a good impulse has permanently, or for the moment, got the better of the

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bad. If the man had no bad impulses, he would not have done the act; if he had no good impulses, he would never have repented of it[1]. On the deterministic view what the man will say to himself will be something of this kind: 'No doubt it is quite true that, I being what I then was, my antecedents being what they were, circumstances being what they were, it was inevitable enough that I should have acted as I did. The fact that I should be the sort of being that the act showed me to be is precisely what causes me pain when I think of it. In the light of further reflection, in an altered mood, through the "expulsive power of a new affection" or in consequence of some other psychological change, I now loathe that side of my character which was uppermost at that moment. I regard it as bad, and desire to be rid of it.' Could any theory about the genesis of that bad self cause the man now to repent of such a 'godly sorrow,' or weaken the tendency of such sorrow to improve his conduct for the future? If such a theory did have that effect, this would seem to show that the sorrow was less sorrow for sin than a desire to throw the blame of it upon somebody else—God, or Nature, or 'circumstances,' or the like—or a desire to escape the punishment which he thinks would be no longer due, if it was really his permanent self that was partly bad and not a momentary act of undetermined choice which might reveal nothing as to the character of that self.

But it may be alleged that it is not remorse or repentance in itself that cannot be explained on deterministic principles, but that consciousness of responsibility which is presupposed by that experience. What does responsibility really mean? Etymologically the word signifies of course the liability to be called upon to answer for an act, with the implication that, if the agent cannot make a satisfactory defence of it, he may justly be punished. A man is said to be responsible for an act for which he might justly be punished. We hold that a sane man is responsible for a crime, because it is just to punish him for it, if he cannot disprove the allegation that he committed it.

[1] I here substitute 'repentance' for 'remorse,' since a mere wish that we had acted otherwise inspired by no moral aversion for the past, and accompanied by no desire to be better, has confessedly no moral value.

We hold that a man is not responsible for a fever not caught through any neglect of duty, because it would be unjust to punish him for it. The suggestion that Determinism undermines the idea of responsibility means at bottom that on the deterministic view punishment would be unjust. Whether that is so or not, must depend upon the view we take of the nature of punishment. And that is a subject which has already really been sufficiently discussed. If the true object of punishment be retribution, there might be something to be said for the suggestion that Determinism would make it unjust. It is true that such a connexion between Indeterminism and retributive punishment has not always been recognized: some peculiarly truculent supporters of vindictive punishment are Determinists. Still it may, perhaps, be admitted that retribution would be slightly more intelligible and less irrational upon an indeterministic than upon a deterministic basis. But if we were right in rejecting the idea of retribution, the fact that a man 'could not help' being born as he was, or educated as he was, is no reason why he should not be punished. If the judgement of value is to be trusted, he is (to the extent of his actual wrongdoing) a bad man; and (again assuming the validity of our moral judgements) a bad man is a being who ought not to exist or who, if he does exist, ought to be turned into a good one by every means in our power. The protection of Society is of course another reason why he should be punished, the protection of Society meaning the true good of other individuals, each of whom may be worth as much or more than the offender. Ideally punishment ought to secure both ends: practically, in the administration of ordinary criminal law, the social object has to be the prominent one. But, whichever side of punishment we look at, Determinism does nothing to make it unjust or irrational. To allow the man guilty of a crime freely to prey upon Society, because that crime was in the circumstances the inevitable consequence of a bad character, would be unjust, because it would be treating that individual's freedom from pain as of more value than the Well-being of many thousands, which it is not; and Justice means treating every one (as far as possible) according to his true worth. To refuse to make him better because the process of making him so is one which involves

some pain would be to treat freedom from pain as of more importance than moral character, which it is not. No greater kindness can be shown to a bad man than to make him a better one, though the process may be a painful one. If punishment be 'social surgery' or a moral medicine for the individual, the fact that a bad man was produced by causes is as poor a reason for refusing to apply it as it would be to condemn a needful operation because the patient's disease or accident was no fault of his own. In saying that wrongdoing is a disease, we must always bear in mind the immense difference between physical disease and spiritual disease, and the consequent difference in the necessary remedies. It is not only from the point of view of Society and legal punishment that Indeterminism is not necessary for responsibility, but from the point of view of the individual himself. If he is sincerely penitent, the discovery that he has got a bad self will not make him ask for the remission, but for the infliction of punishment, if haply by that means the bad self may be turned into a better one.

Not only is Determinism not inconsistent with responsibility, but it may even be maintained with much force that it is Indeterminism which really undermines responsibility. A free act is, according to the Indeterminist, an absolutely new beginning, not springing from, or having any necessary connexion with, the past[1]. The question may be raised, What is the meaning of holding me 'responsible' for some past act of mine if that act did not really proceed from and reveal the true nature of the self which I still am? If the act sprang up of itself (so to speak) without having any root in my previous being, no goodness of my previous self could possibly have prevented its perpetration. And, as it revealed nothing of my past self, so it would be unwarrantable to regard it as reflecting upon my present character; since the present self is, *in so far as free*, simply the momentary new beginnings which from time to time intervene in the series of my actions without springing from those actions,

[1] This is sometimes evaded by saying that the act is not *wholly* unconnected with the past. The answer is that *so far as it is free*, it is so unconnected: in so far as it is not unconnected with the past, it is not free in the Indeterminist sense.

or from the permanent self revealed in them. It is proposed, for instance, to punish me for a theft which I committed five years ago. On the determinist hypothesis it is reasonably held that the self which stole is the same self which I now am. It is proposed to punish me either (from the retributive point of view) because the Categorical Imperative says that those who steal shall be punished, or (from the medicinal and curative point of view) because it is presumed that the same thievish tendencies which revealed themselves are still there, and may be removed or counteracted by punishment. But from the indeterminist point of view I might protest: 'It is true that this is the same animal organism in connexion with which five years ago a regrettable incident occurred. But that theft did not spring from the same Ego as that which now directs the movements of these hands. It was not a self with thievish tendencies that stole. Previous to that act I was not thievish. You, my Indeterminist Judge, admit that so far as that act was free, it did not spring from anything in my character, but from some extraneous and incalculable force which had never revealed itself in me till that unfortunate moment. And, as it was not my past self that committed it, so neither was it my present self. You admit that so far as anything in my past may have necessitated or determined what I am now, I am not free; and you say it is only free acts for which people are responsible. But I, the present free-willing self, am quite a different sort of person from the self of five years ago which stole. I now deeply deplore the strange behaviour of the undetermined volition which caused my hands to steal, but you might just as well punish any other person for the act as myself. And, as punishment would be unjust from a retrospective point of view, so it would be useless as regards the future. In so far as my present self determines my future, my acts are not really free, and it is (you say) only free acts that are of any moral value. No efforts on my part, no efforts on the part of my punisher, can possibly prevent an undetermined theft taking place to-morrow in connexion with my organism: but they might equally take place in connexion with yours. What is the use of punishing and reproving me if, in so far as my present self determines my future, my acts are unfree

and therefore morally worthless; while, in so far as they are really free, they cannot be influenced by anything that I or you can do now?'

On indeterminist premisses it seems to me that this line of argument is absolutely unanswerable. The Indeterminist will attempt to evade its force by admitting that character does influence, though it does not completely 'determine', our acts; that there is always a possibility of action not in accordance with previous character, a possibility which the gradual formation of character is progressively diminishing and perhaps may ultimately extinguish altogether; while the character and the resulting acts still retain their moral value because they are (in so far as free) the results of the previous undetermined acts. But, when such a plea is urged, it is forgotten that 'chances' or 'probabilities' are not real things, but merely modes of our judgement based on imperfect knowledge of the causes at work. In so far as we believe in events undetermined by causes, we believe in pure chance; and in pure chance we have no ground for estimating degrees of probability at all. Pure chance is as irrational and unthinkable an idea as Fate: and to admit that our acts are—whether wholly or partially—determined by pure chance is surely as fatal to the idea of responsibility as to ascribe them to an external, overruling Fate. And if there were such things as human acts determined by pure chance, they could not with any reasonableness be regarded as acts for which any particular person is responsible. We have now come round from the purely ethical to the metaphysical aspect of the question. Without entering in detail into the idea of Causality, we may say that all accounts of that category agree in this—that everything *which has a beginning* must be accounted for and explained as the necessary outcome of something already in existence before that beginning. There are such things as new beginnings in the world, but every new beginning has the reason or ground of its occurrence in that which was before. In that sense the law of universal Causality—quite a different thing from the mechanical uniformity of Nature—does present itself to my mind as an absolute necessity of thought. An absolutely new beginning, unconnected with the past, is unthinkable. No

indeterminist theory has ever been able to get over that difficulty, so far as I (with the strongest predisposition to believe in a theory so often associated in other people's minds with the beliefs which I hold most firmly and cherish most reverently) have ever been able to discover.

Nevertheless, so great are the difficulties of the subject, so small is our human capacity for adequate and self-consistent thought when we reach these profound questions as to the ultimate nature of things, that I should be quite willing to acquiesce in an ultimate antinomy between our speculative and our ethical thinking, if the idea of Indeterminism presented itself to me as in any sense a postulate of Ethics. Antinomies cannot both be true, but *we* may sometimes be unable to resolve them; though the belief in unresolvable antinomies or contradictions more often springs from intellectual laziness or intellectual cowardice (when they are urged in a conservative interest) or love of paradox (when used for destructive purposes) than from real intellectual humility and love of Truth. Any one to whom the idea of Indeterminism still seems ethically necessary has the best of rights to declare his belief in it (for our ethical thinking is as trustworthy as any other kind of thinking), even though he should be unable to reconcile it with that idea of Causality which is the postulate of his scientific thinking. But for myself I am unable to discern any ethical objection to Self-determinism, or any ethical advantage in Indeterminism, which does not spring from misunderstanding.

V

Indeterminism is then to my mind no postulate of pure Ethics. But there is another point of view from which it may be urged that the idea is essential to the rational interpretation of the Universe. It may be regarded as essential to the true appreciation of the relation between the human will and that universal Will from which a sound Metaphysic sees reason to believe that the human will is ultimately derived. And here let me admit that, in dealing with this aspect of the matter, I should wish to speak in a less confident tone. Here we are approaching the 'greatest wave' not merely of the Free-will debate but of

all metaphysical controversy. A full discussion of such a question cannot be expected in a purely ethical treatise; but neither can all reference to it be avoided by a writer who believes that a true theory of Ethics should connect itself with a true theory of the Universe. 'We must do what we can.'

When the theory of Determinism is held in connexion with a philosophy which finds the ultimate ground and source of all being in a rational will, it is impossible to escape the inference that the Will of God ultimately causes everything in the Universe which has a beginning—including therefore souls and their acts, good and bad alike. There is nothing in this admission which can compel us to take back anything that has been said about the idea of self-determination, and the responsibility of the individual soul for its own acts. That we are the cause of our own acts is a matter of immediate experience[1], as well as a necessary implication of our ethical consciousness. And that truth is not in the least affected by the undeniable fact that we did not make ourselves, and consequently are not the sole causes of those acts. Whatever difficulties there may be (especially from an idealistic point of view) in the old distinction between the 'first Cause' and 'second causes' as applied to purely natural events, some distinction of the kind is certainly required in dealing with the causation of human acts. Human acts are not merely acts which succeed one another in a necessary order imposed from without (like events in the world of matter), but events the character of which is really determined by the nature of that soul whose acts they are, a soul which is active, which is ever growing and modifying its own nature by its own self-development. And yet the development is a development of an original nature which the individual did not create for himself, and is dependent for its continuance from moment to moment upon the continued existence of a world which the individual did not create. Theologians usually express this twofold aspect of human acts by speaking of the 'co-operation' of God in every act of human volition. Philosophers may prefer some other mode of expression, but in one way or other we have to recognize

[1] For a defence of this position I may refer to Dr. Stout's chapter on 'the Concept of Mental Activity' in *Analytic Psychology*, Vol. I, Bk. II, chap. i.

that the individual is the real cause of his own acts, and yet that (on the determinist hypothesis) he is not the sole or only or ultimate cause of them. From any philosophical standpoint[1] the ultimate cause of every particular event is the original nature of a Whole which has no cause and no beginning. If the idealistic Theist is right, the Whole consists of God and the system of souls, including the world which is their experience: and, if the souls have a beginning, then (though in some ultimate metaphysical sense they may conceivably be regarded as part of, or of one substance with, God) the beginning of their conscious individual life, as well as all subsequent stages of that life, must be regarded as ultimately due to the Will of God. There is nothing in all this to alter the fact that the individual is the cause of his own acts: the individual is immediately conscious of his own activity. If God causes those acts, He causes them in quite a different way from that in which He causes other events—events in the natural world, or even the acts of non-moral animals. For purely ethical purposes we need not look beyond the immediate cause of the acts: the cause why a bad act is done really is the fact that there is a bad soul in the world. Nothing can alter that, and that is all that we want from a purely ethical point of view. Yet from the metaphysical or theological point of view we must admit also that the soul is made or caused by God: and one cannot help asking oneself the question why God should make bad souls, and so cause bad acts to be done[2].

I have already explained that I find the answer to that question, in so far as any answer to it can be given, in the theory

[1] Except *in a certain sense* that of Pluralism, which I deal with below.

[2] Many Philosophers will attempt to evade the difficulty by merely protesting against the use of such terms as 'making' or 'creation.' But the objection, when applied to the beginning of souls, seems based upon some idea of the eternity of Substance which (if it is to be admitted at all) is really applicable only to matter. It is possible to find a meaning for the idea that souls are all parts or manifestations of a single Substance, but I can find no meaning for the idea that they are parts of a single consciousness (see above, p. 238). Any one who admits that the individual consciousness is not without beginning, and is in time, and is the cause of acts in time, must admit that God causes that consciousness to begin, and is so far (if only so far) the cause of each successive event in its subsequent development.

which—expressed in the inadequate and analogical language which the Philosopher of any school is obliged to use when attempting to explain the ultimate nature of things—must be described as the union in one and the same Being of absolute Goodness with limited Power. Inasmuch as the limitation of Power springs not from outside but from within, we may continue to speak of God as the Infinite, if it makes us any happier to do so; but, in view of the pantheistic tendency of this mode of speech, when adopted in its strict philosophical sense, it may be well to avoid the term altogether. The point of the theory which I advocate is that God causes bad souls to appear as a means to an ultimate good, a good which is unattainable without them. The bad is willed, or (if we like to use that rather anthropomorphic term) 'permitted,' by God as a means to a greater good, without on that account ceasing to be really bad. A better Universe is imaginable, but a better Universe is not possible, because nothing is *really* possible but what is or will be actual. If we say that God might possibly have created a worse world than that which He has created or does create, we can mean only that, if we looked only to his Power and not to his Goodness, we should see no reason why the world should not be worse than it is; and, if we say that God might possibly have created a better world than ours, we mean that, if we looked only to his Goodness and not to his Knowledge and his Power, we should see no reason why the world should not be better than it is. It must be admitted that the world is made what it is by a divine volition or series of volitions which is made what it is by the positive and eternal nature of God. That all things flow with rigorous necessity from that nature might truly be said, were it not that the use of the term 'necessity' is generally associated with the denial of just that doctrine which is here asserted—that whatever happens in the world is really willed by a self-conscious Spirit for the attainment of the ends which He knows to be essentially best.

It will be contended by some that we are still making God the author of evil, though He wills it only as a means, and not as an end. But how far, after all, would our theory of the Universe be improved by the admission of undetermined choice, side by

side with original character and circumstance, as a source of human conduct with a resulting reaction upon character? Undoubtedly, if we could bring ourselves to believe in Indeterminism, we could regard the possibility of sin (but not its actuality) as a necessary condition of real Morality, which is the highest kind of good. So far the difficulty of accounting for evil in a God-willed Universe would be diminished. And, if the difficulty were wholly removed by such a hypothesis, that might be a sufficient reason for accepting it, while frankly acknowledging our inability to reconcile it with the self-evident law of Causality. But, unfortunately, the difficulty is not removed, but only a little attenuated or disguised. Only a small part of the evil in the Universe can, on any view which does not refuse to look at the facts, be traced to the abuse of our power of undetermined choice. The hypothesis will not account for the sufferings of animals, or for that enormous proportion of human suffering which does not in any way arise out of moral evil[1]: in so far as the human suffering is accounted for as necessary for discipline and formation of character, that explanation is equally open to those who reject Indeterminism. Nor will it account even for *all* moral evil. Such an enormous proportion of the moral evil in the Universe is clearly not due to the abuse of Freedom that the difficulty is only slightly attenuated by the introduction of an undetermined factor into the well-springs of action. It may, indeed, be alleged that much of the evil, which in the individual is due to inheritance and environment, originally sprang from the acts of undetermined wrongdoing. But our knowledge of the actual causes of human wrongdoing is sufficient to make it extremely improbable that, if such an element of undetermined choice exists in human life, it can account for any large proportion of the moral evil which in the individual arises immediately from inheritance and circum-

[1] This has been so strongly felt by Renouvier that in *La Nouvelle Monadologie* he has elaborated a theory of a pre-natal Fall. Renouvier's is perhaps the ablest modern attempt to think out the Indeterminist position; but it is unconvincing, and involves much which strikes the unconvinced reader as pure mythology. That the idea of a possible sinless evolution of humanity under the actual conditions of this planet is unthinkable, no one shows more convincingly than the Neo-Leibnizian Philosopher.

stance: certainly it cannot account for all. And we have already seen that to declare that only the undetermined good volition is truly and morally good, or the undetermined bad volition truly evil, contradicts the plainest deliverances of the unsophisticated moral consciousness. And if we admit the existence of *any* moral evil whatever which the individual 'cannot help' (in the sense in which the Indeterminist alleges that Determinism makes sin something which we cannot help), that evil is really *for him* determined, and springs in the last resort from that ultimate constitution of the Universe which to the Theist is identical with the nature of God. The Indeterminist at least cannot blame the objector for following a too anthropomorphic line of thought, when he urges that God is as much responsible for evils which He foresees will certainly flow from the use which some individual will actually make of the freedom with which He has endowed them, as a human being would be responsible for the consequences if he placed loaded fire-arms in the hands of people who would be sure to commit murder with them. If it be said that God does not know that the freedom will be abused, and we frankly give up the idea of Omniscience [1], it may be asked whether we should consider that his responsibility was much diminished if a man put the fire-arms into the hands of children without knowing whether they would or would not make a proper use of them. And after all a doctrine of Free-will which involves a denial of God's

[1] As is done by Professor James in *The Will to Believe*, p. 180 sq., where the attempt is made to reconcile this undetermined element with the rationality of the Universe by the suggestion that God is like a consummate chess-player encountering a novice: he does not know what move the novice will make, but he does know that, whatever move the novice makes, he will beat him in the end. This is perhaps the best attempt that has ever been made to deal with the difficulty, but it does not get over the objection that these estimates as to what is possible are based upon the assumption of Causality. The expert knows all the moves that the laws of nature and the rules of the game permit the novice to take. Where there is an absolutely undetermined element, it is difficult to see on what grounds its limits can be fixed. If God cannot foresee what use the creatures will make of their freedom, how could He foresee that they will not all choose evil, and persistently choose it so far as and so long as they are free? And such a choice would presumably defeat the purpose of God.

Omniscience cannot claim any superiority over such a theistic Determinism as I have defended on the score of avoiding a limitation of the divine Omnipotence. Omniscience need not involve Omnipotence, but Omnipotence (in the popular sense) certainly includes Omniscience. These are old difficulties; but they have never been satisfactorily met either by Philosophers or Theologians, except in so far as they have candidly admitted a limitation of divine power. Indeterminist theories introduce that limitation quite as much as determinist theories. Not to be able to cause good without a possibility of evil is as much a limitation as not to be able to cause good without the certainty of evil. All the Theodicies really admit such a limitation, except those which frankly throw Morality to the winds, and save the divine Omnipotence or the divine 'Infinitude' at the expense of the divine Love. In this case either Morality degenerates into obedience to the arbitrary and capricious commands of a being who pursues ends not intrinsically good (or at all events an end in which Morality finds no place), or the idea of a divine Will disappears altogether and with it all possibility of attributing Love or any other ethical character to God. An unethical Deism and an unethical Pantheism are the Scylla and the Charybdis between which religious thought can only steer its way by admitting that God's ends can only be attained by the adoption of means which, in themselves and abstractedly considered, are bad, and which remain bad from whatever point of view we look at them; however much they may be justified as involving less evil on the whole than the omission of those means and the non-attainment of the ends to which they are means. In truth the very idea of means to an end is unintelligible when the means are supposed to be adopted by a being who can attain any end whatever without any means at all. The idea of a being who is omnipotent, in the popular sense of the word, is the idea of a being who has no determinate character or nature whatever. A Universe in which everything might happen would be a Universe in which nothing was caused. The idea of a Universe in which there was an 'infinite' amount of good contains a *contradictio in adiecto*. However much good there was in the world, we could still ask, 'Why not more good?'—and so on *ad infinitum*.

Real being must be being of a definite amount. A God who was unwilling to create more good for any other reason than inability to do so would not be perfectly good. On the other hand, there is no similar contradiction in the idea of a Will or a Being who is perfectly good inasmuch as He causes all the good that his own nature makes it possible for Him to cause.

We have seen then that the only point at which a difficulty is created either for Morality or for Religion by the acceptance of Determinism lies in its tendency to make God in a sense the 'author of evil'—a sense which in no way excludes the equally true proposition that man is the author of it. In a sense, indeed, man is the sole author of evil; for man alone wills the evil otherwise than as a means to the true good. God wills the evil only as a means to the good, and to will evil as a means to the good is not *to be* evil, or to will evil as such, or to exhibit any defect of Goodness. And we have seen that this is a difficulty which Indeterminism has equally to admit, since to cause a possibility of evil is equally to be the author of evil, while the plea that the evil is a means to the good is equally open to the Determinist.

After all that can be said on this side I admit frankly that it would be more satisfactory to be able to say that God was in no sense the cause of evil. That is only to say that I could wish the Universe were better than it is; and, if God be the God who is revealed to us by our moral consciousness, He wishes that too. All Libertarian Theologies represent God as wishing ends which are not fully attained: and a Self-determinist Theology which is content to maintain that the end is attained sufficiently to justify the means involves no further limitation of the divine power.

VI

The desire to avoid the admission that God originates souls with evil potentialities which must necessarily develope into evil actuality is the inspiring motive of those theories of Pre-existence which, from the days of Plato and of Origen to those of modern 'Pluralism,' seem always to have sprung up wherever men have grappled in earnest with the problem of evil. According

to such theories souls are uncreated; while the world-process is one by which a good but not omnipotent God is getting rid of the evil in those souls, and bringing them to the highest perfection of which they are intrinsically capable [1]. We thus get rid of the necessity of tracing any evil, even indirectly and as a means, to the Will of God. We trace it to the limitation of souls on their ethical side, instead of to the limitations of God on his non-ethical side. We are thus able not only to trace all moral evil to human willing (we can do that without Pre-existence), but to nothing else; the individual soul is not only the cause, but the sole and ultimate cause, of its own sin. In that way we do seem to meet the instinctive demand which has found expression in the popular indeterminist theory. For even Indeterminism has seldom found it necessary to attribute undetermined choice to God. In proportion as Theologians have done so, they have tended towards a non-moral view of God's nature, and have ended by making a non-moral divine caprice the sole standard of right and wrong in human conduct [2]. Ethically minded Theologians have generally found it enough to insist that God's actions are limited by no necessity but what arises from his own goodness, that (in the words of Hooker) 'the being of God is a kind of law to his working [3].' And the theory of eternal Pre-existence ascribes to man as much freedom as it allows to God. This is so far satisfactory. But for one difficulty which the theory of Pre-existence removes it creates a hundred. The connexion between mind and body, between character and organism, between parental or racial character and individual character, is so close, that, if the real inmost core of a man's character be due to an original eternal nature modified by the acts of previous lives,

[1] e. g. in Professor Howison's *Limits of Evolution* and Mr. Schiller's *The Riddles of the Sphinx* and other writings. These last writers, however, so far as I understand them, think that Pre-existence is not a sufficient explanation of the origin of Evil without Indeterminism, thereby giving up what would seem to my own mind the chief attraction of the system.

[2] This tendency is exhibited by Duns Scotus, who based the second table of the Decalogue upon the arbitrary Will of God, and by Occam, who subsequently referred both tables to such a Will—a course in which he was followed by many ultra-Calvinistic Divines.

[3] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. I, chap. 2.

we must suppose that every soul after each successive death is kept waiting in some extra-corporal limbo till Evolution has developed parents to whom it can suitably be assigned, and an organism which will serve as a faithful expression of its present moral status no less than as an adequate discipline for its future moral advancement. The theory is certainly not capable of positive disproof, but it is unsupported by the obvious and *prima facie* evidence of experience; and involves, the more it is worked out, a ramifying network of difficulties only to be disguised by some mythological structure which itself is the greatest difficulty of all. And in the end it seems to give us no ethical advantage which we cannot have without it. If the bad acts of the eternal soul do not spring from its own eternal nature, we have all the difficulties of Indeterminism just as acutely with Pre-existence as without it. If they do spring from that nature, the evil springs from the inherent limitations of a Universe which tends towards the good but has not fully attained it, and so far contains an inherent element of evil. Why should it be more satisfactory to account for this evil as due to the uncaused limitations of the individual, instead of being due to the uncaused limitation of the divine nature on its non-ethical side? Pre-existence limits God, and limits Him from the outside. Determinism without Pre-existence limits Him from the inside only, without limiting the perfection of his moral nature. God is limited, but only by his own nature and by the existence of other beings which owe their existence to that nature, and such a limitation is one which involves no ethical imperfection. On the speculative difficulties—apart from Ethics—which the theory of Pre-existence involves, I forbear to dwell. It is enough to say here that the order of the Universe is more easily accounted for by a Monism which does not deny the reality of individual selfhood than by the Pluralism which recognizes a number of entirely distinct and independent sources of Being.[1]

[1] Most of the difficulties urged against pluralistic theories seem to apply equally to Dr. McTaggart's system, according to which the Absolute consists in a society of eternal souls, none of which is sufficiently superior in power to the rest to be exalted to the name of God, or to be invested with the

VII

I believe that at bottom the unwillingness of ethical natures to acquiesce in Determinism of the kind which I have indicated arises from their inability to get rid of the idea of a determination from the outside—a suggestion which is really no doubt involved in the more materialistic varieties of Determinism. They cannot get rid of the suggestion of an external coercion constraining the man to act in a way in which he—the real man, who is (as they rightly hold) no mere product and plaything of purely physical forces—does not wish and desire to act. And that is to confuse the causality of a self-developing self with the causality of mechanical forces which always is determination *ab extra* [1]. Or, if they do realize that it is the nature of the self that determines the particular act, they limit their idea of the self to the self already revealed in present consciousness, and suppose that Determinism negatives the possibility of repentance, improvement, change of character. They forget that the self is a being whose whole nature is at present unrevealed by anything outside itself at present existing in the Universe—unrevealed either to self-observation or to any human observation, though (we may suppose) not unrevealed to the Universal Mind. And this consideration sets strict limits to the possibility

attributes usually associated with the idea of Godhead. The speculative difficulty of Pluralism is, indeed, nominally removed by the declaration that the souls collectively form a 'unity' or 'system', but the difficulty of accounting for the unity and order of a material world which is admitted to exist only in the experience of selves is still greater on this view than it is on the hypothesis of a God ominiscient and enormously superior in power to other spirits, but not limited by their independent existence. According to Dr. McTaggart the spirits simply happen to find their experience partially identical and capable of being reduced to an intelligible system, though it never actually exists as a system in any one mind, does not completely exist (so far as we know) even in all of them taken together, and is (except as regards the infinitesimally small portion of the Universe known to consist in the voluntary acts of human or similar spirits) not willed by any or all of them. These difficulties will be felt with peculiar force by those who (like the present writer) regard the causality of Will as the only true causality.

[1] Except in so far as the successive changes of the material Universe are regarded as ultimately willed by God, and are so due to the successive volitions which are the unfolding of his eternal Nature.

of that prediction of future conduct which is instinctively resented by minds for which ethical considerations are predominant[1]. The possibilities of gradual improvement, or, occasionally, of apparently sudden new departures which look as if they were unconnected with everything in the previous life, can never be estimated with certainty by any knowledge of the character as it has already unfolded itself in the man's actual consciousness. Experience does no doubt show us that the question whether and how far those possibilities shall unfold themselves is largely determined by the nature of the environment, and there is no ethical advantage in denying that

[1] This possibility is further limited by the consideration that our psychical states differ qualitatively, and that what we call the same psychical event (emotion, feeling, desire, &c.) in two different persons, or at two different times in the same person, is not really the same. There is a certain uniqueness about each person, and even about each mental state of each person. Hence it may safely be said that we shall never succeed in framing 'laws' from which all human actions could be predicted: the principle that the same cause will always produce the same effect will not help us in the psychical sphere, for the same cause can never recur. All this has been admirably pointed out by M. Bergson (*Sur les données imméd. de la Conscience*, passim). But (1) that writer seems to ignore, and even to deny, the fact that there is something alike in psychical states as well as something different: we can therefore to a certain extent discover laws or uniformities, both in the connexion of the psychical states *inter se* and in their relations to physical events, though the laws will express tendencies which are always liable to be modified within certain limits by the unique peculiarities of individual persons. (2) M. Bergson hardly seems to recognize that there may be causal connexion even when there is uniqueness. It is true that no knowledge of the 'laws of character' would enable us completely to say how a given individual (in so far as he differs from all other individuals) is going to act without a knowledge of the fact that he will actually act in a certain way, but that does not prevent us from regarding the act as the necessary result of what he originally was: to an intelligence that knew him through and through the future act would be seen, as it were, latent in the character, though such a knowledge is absolutely inconceivable for an intelligence such as ours. M. Bergson's own position, which he regards as the opposite of Determinism, is one which seems to be fairly describable by the word 'Self-determinism.' I know of no better definition of Freedom (in the true sense) than his 'nous sommes libres quand nos actes émanent de notre personalité entière' (p. 131), but it is desirable for the sake of clearness to admit that this is not the liberty which the Indeterminists want, and I am not sure that this would be admitted by M. Bergson himself.

determination. From this point of view Determinism is far more encouraging and stimulating to moral effort than a logically thought-out Indeterminism. Even if we do not push the demand for Freedom to the point of denying that a man can ever be made really better by another's efforts, the prospect of ridding the world of at least its worst evils must be small indeed, if no spiritual influence from outside, no response to that influence from within, no continuance in well-doing, no education of character can ever exclude an unmeasurable possibility that sudden and undetermined moral evil may break out afresh in the apparently purified will, and be followed by all the determined moral and other evil which such an outbreak must necessarily bring with it for other beings.

The deep-seated moral repulsion against Determinism which used at one time to characterize the most zealous champions of the rights of Conscience was, I believe, largely due to the association of Determinism with a gloomy and unethical Theology, and in particular with the idea of everlasting punishment. The attempt to vindicate the ways of God to man on the assumption that He makes bad men only in order that they may be tortured everlastingly, and that not as a means to the moral improvement or future Well-being of themselves or others, was indeed a desperate task [1]. Even now Indeterminism is often maintained by conservative Theologians because it seems to make the doctrine of everlasting torment a trifle less repulsive to the moral consciousness. When we once get rid of such baseless figments, the idea that God creates men with some bad elements in their characters, and societies containing some men on the whole bad, in order that in the end a good greatly overbalancing that evil should be realized, is one which has nothing in it offensive to the religious consciousness or depressing to the moral energies. Indeterminist Theologies and determinist Theologies alike represent the history of the world as a divine education of souls. According to indeterminist systems that

[1] It is rarely that the idea of everlasting punishment has been defended, as it was by Abelard, on Utilitarian grounds—as an example to the rest so valuable as to make the everlasting punishment of a certain number of sinners productive of a maximum of good as the whole.

education may, and (some would add) must, fail in a certain number of cases: the older Theologians did not hesitate to say the vast majority [1]. To admit that, is to admit a limitation of the divine power: God, it is represented, wishes that all should be saved, but some are not saved. Their explanation is the intrinsic impossibility of the greatest good without this possibility of evil—a possibility which we know, and which God foreknew [2], to be actual. And that constitutes a limitation.

VIII

When once we admit any kind or sort of inherent limitation to the possibilities of divine action, it becomes impossible, no doubt, dogmatically to determine the extent to which the ends desired by the eternally loving consciousness will actually be realized. To declare that every soul will, immediately on death, or even eventually, attain the same kind or the same level of moral, intellectual, and aesthetic excellence would be a very foolish assertion, completely opposed to all the analogies of our present experience. Souls are not the same, and it does not look as if they ever would be. To say that every soul will reach some particular level of happiness or moral perfection which we may choose to understand by the term 'salvation' would be going beyond what we have a right to affirm, though perhaps, in so far as we can distinguish between positive moral evil and a limitation of moral goodness, the ultimate extinction of the former is not beyond what we may hope. What we have a right to affirm is that the Universe must be moving to an end which is good on the whole in the sense that its existence is better than its non-existence, a good which is worth the evil that it costs. That there is at no point a final sacrifice of the part to the whole is more than we can positively affirm; but the more profoundly we believe in the ultimate rationality of things, the more strongly we shall be disposed to believe that for each

[1] It was not only Calvinists who took this view. See Newman's appalling sermon 'Many called, few chosen.'

[2] From the point of view of Orthodoxy. Few modern Libertarian Theologians are bold enough to admit that Indeterminism is incompatible with complete foreknowledge: if foreknowledge is denied, we have limitation again.

soul once born with the consciousness of a moral ideal an end is realized which will on the whole make it good for that soul to have lived. We must not push such a reasonable hope beyond the limits prescribed by the actual and undeniable facts; but, within those limits, the more completely any theory of the Universe allows for such a final triumph of good, the more probable will it become for a mind which has once taken the initial step of recognizing in the objectivity of the moral consciousness a revelation of the ultimate meaning and nature of the Universe.

How far this principle will allow us to believe in the immortality of animals we have no adequate data for determining. In the case of the lowest animals the continuity of their existence is so small that it becomes difficult to suppose that any future destiny of theirs would intelligibly allow us to regard their existence as 'good on the whole' in the case of those (we may hope, the comparatively few) who have failed in their present existence to attain an overplus of good (such good as they are capable of) on the whole. If we suppose a creature of a very low type rewarded hereafter by elevation to a higher kind of existence, such a being would not seem to be the same as its original germ in any sense which would permit us to regard its bliss as a compensation *to it* for its previous sufferings. Here it does seem probable that there must be some sacrifice of particular individuals to the good of the whole. As we ascend the scale of existence, the greater the worth of their life becomes, the greater becomes the probability that no individual will be treated wholly as a means. There we must leave the matter. It is perhaps too dogmatic to assert that every individual will attain Immortality even among human souls. It may, no doubt, be said that all that we need for a rationalization of the Universe is a future, and not an immortal, existence. That is quite true, but the difficulty of believing in Immortality—either the real speculative difficulty or the merely psychological difficulty of imagining or envisaging it—is not greater than that presented by the idea of a future but not unending existence (except perhaps for those who regard all temporal existence as a mere delusive 'appearance'). The hypothesis of Immortality for all souls whose

actual or potential capacity reaches a certain level of value is the one which most completely rationalizes the Universe. Hence, upon the presuppositions already explained, it is the more reasonable hope.

To deal with the difficulties presented by the antinomies involved in the nature of time would carry us far beyond the limits proper to an ethical treatise. From the point of view of Ethics at all events human life is in time, and any completion of the existing life which is to supply a meaning and justification for the defects of the present must be represented as a continuance of the present life in the future. That all our ideas about time are inadequate, and that from the point of view of a divine knowledge the inadequacy must in some way disappear, may be freely admitted. But that is a very different thing from affirming that time belongs to the region of mere 'appearance' and that the only Reality is one which is out of time. The idea of an existence out of time is one which for us can possess no meaning, unless it be taken in a merely negative sense as implying an existence in which the difficulties inherent for an intelligence in the idea of endless succession are 'somehow' transcended, we know not how. These difficulties cannot be here discussed. Suffice it to say that all our judgements of value, and consequently all our moral ideas, presuppose that a good which is not now real may by willing be made real. The fact that that is so is by itself a sufficient reason for distrusting theories of the Universe which tend to make all that is in time a mere delusive 'Maia,' and to represent the real Universe as one in which, as nothing really happens, inertia must be as reasonable as action; or perhaps more reasonable, in so far as the approach to inertia may be thought (however inconsistently) to bring a man nearer to that timeless and changeless state from which temporal existence is a lapse. For the Philosophies in which that which becomes is mere appearance, values too should be merely apparent and unreal[1]. The ethical theory which insists on the vanity of all striving is the natural ally in the

[1] This will no doubt be denied. It may be said that timeless existence may have value. But our judgements of value pronounce that there is a real difference in value between a worse present and a better future: if

sphere of practice of the speculative theories which represent the world or God as an 'is' in whom and for whom there is no 'was' or 'will be' and therefore no becoming. That has been the general tendency of the great historical Religions which are based upon this conception: it would be the tendency of modern pantheistic philosophies if anybody ever thought of taking them seriously enough to attempt living by them. In so far as such theories have entered into the stream of the Western religious consciousness, they have frequently resulted in soul-destroying Quietism. Those who believe that Morality consists in striving, and that Morality is a good-in-itself, will find inspiration in a Theology which represents God too as striving, but as striving for an end which will hereafter be realized in such a measure as to make the striving reasonable.

That the view of Free-will which I have taken involves no difficulties is more than I shall assert. The man who declares that he has got a theory of the Universe which involves no difficulties is simply a man who does not think. I can only say that an idealistic Theism, rooted and grounded in Ethics and developed on the lines which I have endeavoured faintly to sketch, seems to me to involve enormously fewer difficulties than any other theory—constructive, destructive, or agnostic—with which I am acquainted. Nothing appears to be gained by the assumption of Indeterminism. That there is some further solution of the difficulties connected with Free-will and the existence of evil, that some further element of truth in Indeterminism unrecognized by determinist theories might reveal themselves to a more thorough examination, I think extremely probable. I hope that such a further solution of this supreme problem will in time be thought out. But I should myself be inclined to look for such a consummation in any direction rather than in any theory which could properly be called indeterministic.

Once more, I submit, Determinism of the kind I have suggested has nothing in it paralysing or depressing to the most strenuous

that is pronounced to be a delusion, it is difficult to see why any part of the judgement should be retained. At all events the value of the timeless cannot well supply a reason for change in the temporal.

moral effort. To my own mind it is far more inspiring than most Indeterminist theories of the Universe. It represents God as the ultimate source of all being in the Universe that has a beginning, and as directing the world-process towards the goal which shall attain as much of the highest ideally conceivable good as can become actual. He calls upon the higher spiritual beings who have derived their existence from Him to aid in this process. It is a real, and not a merely apparent, struggle to which their God-derived moral consciousness invites them. The evil is a real evil, though an evil destined to be more and more diminished. The rapidity with which and the extent to which the evil will be diminished and the good attained really does depend in part upon human effort. It is true doubtless that God knows how much each of us is capable of aiding towards the process, and how much he will aid; but we do not know, and no human being ever can know until he has acted. And there is nothing in these considerations to paralyse, but everything to quicken and reinforce, all those desires and aspirations which determine the extent and manner in which we shall actually be permitted to take part in the great process of world-redemption [1].

[1] The only modern writer fairly describable as an Indeterminist pure and simple who impresses me with the idea of thoroughly appreciating the question at issue is Lotze (*Microcosmus*, Eng. Trans., I. p. 256 sq.; *Practical Philosophy*, Chap. iii; *Phil. of Religion*, Chap. vii). I do not feel the same in reading Dr. Martineau (*Study of Religion*, II. p. 215 sq.). Nor can I quite understand whether Prof. Ward, whose vindication of the real causality of Will (in *Naturalism and Agnosticism*) seems to me of the highest importance, means to be an Indeterminist or not. The two most convincing arguments against Indeterminism which I know are to be found in Schopenhauer's treatise in *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, and in Dr. McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion* (Chap. v). The position which I have adopted is in the main that of Hegel and his followers, except (1) that their treatment of the subject (especially that of Green) seems to me often unsatisfactory on account of their vagueness as to the distinction between the particular and the universal Ego; and (2) that their theories of a timeless Reality and their views of Causation tend to reduce the causality of Will to be a mere seeming. I feel much in sympathy with Prof. A. E. Taylor's treatment of the subject in *Elements of Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, chap. iv. An admirable account of the real meaning of 'Free-will' (in the Self-determinist sense) is also given by Dr. Shadworth Hodgson (*The Philosophy of Experience*, Vol. IV. p. 118 sq.), though in connexion with a Metaphysic which I cannot accept.

CHAPTER IV

MORALITY AND EVOLUTION

I

I TRUST that the account already given of the nature of our moral judgements will by itself have dispelled the notion that there is anything in the position here advocated inconsistent with a frank and cordial acceptance either of the doctrine of Evolution in general or of the particular form given to it by the great discovery of Charles Darwin. The idea of Morality in general—which we have seen to be at bottom the idea of value—is an *a priori* idea in exactly the same sense as that in which the idea of Quantity or Cause or the laws of thought are *a priori*. And every particular moral judgement involves an *a priori* element just as every particular judgement about Quantity or Causality and every particular act of inference involves an *a priori* element. If the term *a priori* is open to objection, the term 'immediate' will do as well. What is meant is that in these judgements there is an element of knowledge which cannot be explained as sensation or any generalization from sensation. It is undeniable of course that our ideas of Quantity and our powers of reasoning have developed gradually, nor are they equally developed in all races or all individuals. And yet no one thinks of doubting the truth of the multiplication table because there are some savages who (it is said) cannot count ten: nor does any one with a rudimentary training in Metaphysics think this any objection to their *a priori* character. Nor, again, are the varieties of individual judgement inconsistent with the authority that has been claimed for moral judgements as such.

In short, all that has been said as to the difference between the objectivity of the moral judgement and the infallibility of the individual Conscience, all that has been said in explanation of

the variations in moral opinion even among individuals brought up in the same community and at the same stage of moral development, is applicable *a fortiori* to the differences between different races at various stages of moral and intellectual development. And it need hardly be pointed out that the development of the moral consciousness is not merely analogous to the general intellectual development, but is very closely connected therewith. Moral judgements and moral reasonings (though they do involve ideas which cannot be derived from or analysed into other ideas) do also involve every other kind of intellectual activity[1]. That power of abstracting and universalizing which forms to so large an extent the differentia of the human intelligence is eminently necessary in ethical thinking. In ethical matters, as in others, this capacity is gradually developed. Such abstract ideas as 'duty,' 'right,' 'good in general,' 'the duty of man to man as such,' can only be reached at all at a comparatively high stage, and in their most abstract and reflective form only at a very advanced stage, of intellectual development. In the present state of ethical thought it will be perhaps unnecessary further to labour the point that our moral ideas are gradually developed in exactly the same sense, and in exactly the same way, as any other of the capacities of the human soul, and that this forms no more reason for doubting their validity than in the parallel case of the multiplication table.

These considerations might be held to dispense us from any further treatment of the relation of Evolution to Ethics. The Moral Philosopher is no more bound to deal with the history of ethical development than the Geometrician is bound to preface a geometrical treatise with an anthropological or psychological discussion upon the genesis and development of the idea of space and its various determinations. The business of the Moral Philosopher is simply to analyse the contents of the moral consciousness as it is. No true account of what the moral consciousness actually is can possibly be vitiated by any true account of its genesis. No doubt accounts are sometimes given

[1] This point is well brought out by Mr. L. T. Hobhouse in his *Mind in Evolution*, Chap. xiii sq.

of the genesis of Morality which do seem to be destructive of the authority claimed for the moral faculty. Where this is the case, it must be due to one of three causes: (1) Either the facts alleged are true as far as they go but they will not by themselves really explain the ideas which they are supposed to explain, or (2) the moral historian must be mistaken in the facts on which the theory is supposed to rest, or (3) what purports to be a mere statement of historical facts really implies already a theory about the actual nature of Morality and the developed moral consciousness which goes beyond the mere statement of historical or psychological facts.

An illustration or two may be desirable. It is asserted that 'Altruism' has grown out of 'Egoism.' But if I am right as a matter of psychological fact in asserting that I do now desire another's happiness, no history of the process by which a supposed primitive 'Egoism' passed into Altruism can possibly alter the fact that I am now altruistic, or require me to modify any ethical judgement which may be based upon the value of altruistic conduct. Any theory which purports to require such a modification must be one which at bottom implies that I do not now really desire another's good, but only appear to do so, while in fact I concern myself for my neighbour's good only as a means to my own: and that is a theory which can be refuted by mere introspection. Or take the attempts made to show that the idea of moral obligation is nothing but an inherited fear of the police. No demonstration that there were once people whose moral ideas were limited to a fear of the police, living or ancestral, human or ghostly, can alter the fact that I have now an idea of value which is quite different from a mere feeling or dread of some powerful being, visible or invisible. The theory either misrepresents what I now feel, or fails to account for it, or accounts for it in a way which implies (on the basis of some tacitly assumed metaphysical theory) that, even if I do now, as a matter of psychological fact, think an idea of rightness which is other than fear of an imaginary police, my belief is a delusion which has no basis or foundation in Reason or Reality. The psychological theory (with its ethical implications) does not really rest upon the history; the history rests

either upon mistaken observation of present psychological fact or upon some mistaken metaphysical interpretation of it.

And that brings us to another reason against mixing up the question of what Morality is with theories about the process of its development. The sole data for any ethical theory are those supplied by the actual contents of the moral consciousness. And we know a great deal more about the moral consciousness as it is than we do about the moral consciousness or pre-moral consciousness of savages and animals. We are told by Spencer in regard to Ethics that 'as in other cases, so in this case, we must interpret the more developed by the less developed[1].' Within certain limits the statement no doubt holds to a large extent in the region of physical Science. Much light has no doubt been thrown on the actual nature of animals in the higher stages of Evolution by the study of the lower; but even here the converse statement would be at least equally true. That the undifferentiated protoplasm of the Amoeba discharges the function of nerve as well as of muscle is a fact which could scarcely have been discovered except by enquirers starting with the knowledge of what nerve is and what muscle is in their higher, more differentiated forms. And with regard to Morality and psychical life generally this is still more emphatically the case. For the minds of savages and of animals do not lie open to the direct observation which is possible in the case of their bodies. The simplest statements that we can make about them are arrived at only by inference from our own self-knowledge: and the difficulty of mentally picturing mental states lower than any that we know (to *know* them would at once make them different from what they are) is so great that there must be a considerable presumption against any method of ethical enquiry which pretends to explain the more developed by the less developed. No subject is more speculative than prehistoric (or even historical) Psychology. It is scarcely possible that any account of the genesis of Morality should not presuppose some view as to the actual nature of the developed moral consciousness. If that account is a false one, it must vitiate the whole

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 7. (This work now forms Part I of the *Principles of Morality*, Vol. I, but the pagination is unaltered.)

evolutionary history which is based upon it. A theory of Ethics which rests upon an evolutionary theory which presupposes it really rests upon nothing but itself.

Prima facie these considerations might be held to dispense us from touching upon the question of Evolution and Ethics, except so far as to point out its irrelevance to our present enquiry. The history of moral ideas is no doubt a most important and interesting, as well as a very difficult, subject. It belongs (from different points of view) to Anthropology, to Psychology, to Sociology, to general history, to the history of Philosophy, but not to Philosophy itself. For the present purpose the subject might very well be ignored altogether, and it is impossible to treat it otherwise than most inadequately. But for two reasons it seems better to make a few remarks on the subject than to pass it over altogether. In the first place it is alleged by some evolutionary writers that the doctrine of Evolution supplies us not merely with a history of moral ideas, but with an actual theory of conduct—actual information as to what ought now to be done or left undone—which could not otherwise have been arrived at: and these theories have attracted much attention both with Philosophers and with the general public. The reader may naturally expect that a writer who ignores such theories should at least give some reasons for his disregard of them. Secondly, while from the point of view here adopted it is inconceivable that a theory of Ethics resting upon a sound basis of introspection, with a sound Metaphysic behind it, should be fundamentally revolutionized by the facts of moral Evolution, it does not follow that these facts may not contain some instruction for the Moral Philosopher. All Philosophy must rest upon a comprehensive survey of the whole facts about the Universe as ascertained by Science and by History. Moral Philosophy must rest upon a survey of all the facts which concern the moral life: and among those facts the actual course of development in the moral ideas of mankind (and even of sub-human animals in so far as anything analogous to Morality can be detected in them) occupies an important place. There might well be supposed to be an *a priori* probability that a mental revolution so great as that involved in the general acceptance of the main

principles of Darwinism should have some effect upon Ethics, as upon other departments of human thought. If we approach the speculations of the so-called evolutionary writers with less hope of instruction than we might otherwise do, it is not because the fact that moral ideas have developed, and the particular way in which they have developed, are not matters of profound significance for the Moral Philosopher, but rather because in the main the actual course of ethical development was fairly well known before. The doctrine of Evolution did not come into existence with Darwinism. Darwinism is itself only one particular application of this characteristic idea of all nineteenth-century speculation. The idea of development had been fully appreciated by Hegel, and had been abused by John Henry Newman, long before the appearance of *The Origin of Species*. These remarks are not made for the purpose of depreciating the influence which has been exercised upon thought by the distinctly Darwinian idea of development through natural selection, but merely to moderate our expectations as to the amount of instruction which the Moral Philosopher may expect to find in it.

II

Any discussion of the relation between Ethics and Evolution might be expected to begin with some account of the interesting chapter devoted to that subject by Charles Darwin himself in the *Development of Man*. But his remarks are of so simple and untechnical a character—so little directed to the solution of any definite question discussed by Moral Philosophers—that they hardly call for much remark from the point of view which we have adopted. Darwin's main object was to suggest that there was a complete continuity, in this as in other respects, between animal and human life, and so to prevent the moral capacity of human beings being employed as an argument against the hypothesis of their evolution by slow and gradual stages from a non-human ancestor. This continuity is in one sense of the term a fact which no Moralist, theoretical or practical, has the slightest interest in denying. The differences between man as he is in his developed state and animals as we know them become neither greater nor less because it is possible to trace

a continuous development from the one to the other. It is only the absurd Psychology which supposes that a mental state which has grown out of another mental state or activity still is the state or activity which preceded it—that mental states can be resolved into antecedent states as chemical compounds can be resolved into their component elements—which can raise any prejudice against the admission that intellectually and morally as well as physically man has grown out of a mere animal. No difficulty is created for Ethics by the admission that the non-moral animal has become the moral man by passing through a number of intermediate stages, which has not always existed in the fact that the non-moral infant-in-arms grows into the imperfectly moral child, and the imperfectly moral child into the full-grown and moral adult. In the one case as in the other the difference between the two is in no way lessened by the fact that it is impossible to point to the exact moment at which the transition takes place. Nor is it only our defective knowledge which debars us from drawing the line at any definite point of development. For the difference between the moral and the non-moral is not a single, definite, and assignable difference. We may by abstraction talk of a 'moral faculty,' but the presence of that faculty makes everything else in consciousness different, or (from another point of view) it presupposes such differences in everything else—impulse, feeling, habit, intelligence, will. We might take particular aspects or features of the difference between the moral and the non-moral being and ask in detail when each begins; but even for perfect knowledge the germ of each would be so unlike the developed product that it is only in the light of what it may become that any common character could be discerned between them. It is enough therefore to say that this continuity between the man and the animal may be fully accepted without affecting anything that has been contended for or will be contended for in this book [1].

That there are germs of Morality—germs which, though not

[1] It is true also that all development is only intelligible as a continual series of absolutely new beginnings, and that at particular moments these new beginnings may be of fundamental significance and importance. But I do not profess to expound any theory as to the nature of mental Evolution.

Morality, supply the soil, as it were, in which Morality grows—in the higher animals is probable: it is certain that the lowest men are moral in a very imperfect and rudimentary sense. Their superiority to animals consists, indeed, largely in the fact that they possess a vastly greater capacity for moral education than any existing race of animals. It is only in the light of some practical purpose that there is any meaning in requiring us to say definitely and categorically where Morality begins. With children we shall always have to face the difficulty as best we can. We punish infants only as we punish animals, and at different ages we recognize different stages of 'responsibility' or moral capacity. Fortunately the disappearance of the 'missing links' between mere animal and full man renders the practical questions that arise in this connexion comparatively easy of solution. Even among existent races it is right to recognize their variable moral capacity. We do not give votes to Australian Aborigines, and for many purposes they are rightly treated as children. We may in the fullest degree assert the rights of all existing savages to the elementary rights of humanity—to life, to some measure of liberty and of property—without denying that, had various intermediate species survived, great difficulties might have been felt in deciding who were entitled to be regarded as 'men.' And it might well be that the answer would have been different for different purposes. We might quite reasonably have refused to recognize rights of property in those to whom we still accorded the right to life: we might have defended the enslavement of beings whom we should rightly have protected from arbitrary massacre, and whom we should have scrupled to eat.

Besides this plea for continuity there is little in Darwin's famous chapter which calls for remark here. It is true that he tends to look at Morality from a purely naturalistic point of view, but the treatment is so slight and so popular that the non-naturalistic aspects of Morality are rather ignored than denied. The greatest men of Science are, as a rule, those who know their own limitations best. The pretensions of Evolution to give us a substitute for the old ideas of 'Conscience,' authority, moral obligation, and the like, may therefore be more conve-

niently examined in the works of the writer who has usually been regarded as the prophet of Darwinism in the region of Philosophy. The task is not an easy one; for, though Herbert Spencer claimed, as his greater predecessor did not claim, to write Philosophy, he uses terms in so vague and popular a sense, he is so unacquainted with the previous history and real meaning of the ethical and metaphysical controversies on which he touches, he shows such a profound misconception of the theories which he criticizes, that the humblest student who has the advantage of an elementary training in Philosophy is apt to treat him as one would treat a writer on Geometry who had never read Euclid (or whatever may be his modern equivalent), or a book on Mechanics whose author showed an ignorance of the first law of motion.

Such an estimate of Herbert Spencer would, however, be a mistake. It is true that the Theology against which he girds is a Theology which, even in that writer's early life in a provincial town, could hardly have been preached even in the pulpit or the Sunday school without qualifications and reservations which he did not take the trouble to observe. The exaggerated 'Altruism' which he attacks is something which no Philosopher, Christian or other, has ever seriously taught[1]. The exhortations about the moral duty of preserving one's health, not going out on cold days without a great-coat, and the like were well-recognized ethical precepts even among such very unphilosophical characters as fill the pages of Miss Austen's novels, though the best of them might have given a somewhat lower place in their ethical ideal to mere Valetudinarianism. The 'Intuitionism' which he attacks is something which has never been maintained, though it is undoubtedly true that many intuitional writers have not always fairly faced even the elementary difficulties upon which Spencer harps. It will be unnecessary to examine elaborately this side of Spencer's teaching. But running through these 'glimpses of the obvious' there are two or three ideas which deserve serious attention

[1] Such Altruism was condemned even by mediaeval Councils. The proposition that one ought to love one's neighbour better than oneself has been treated as a definite heresy.

if only because, in more or less altered forms, they have commended themselves to writers of a higher intellectual stature than the author of the *Synthetic Philosophy*.

III

The ethical doctrine of Herbert Spencer may be said to contain three main elements: (*a*) the attempt to reduce the idea of moral authority or rightness in general to the inherited fear of social, regal, and divine or ancestral displeasure; (*b*) the attempt to explain by evolutionary forces, and particularly by the doctrine of natural selection, why this idea of moral authority or rightness came to attach itself to particular kinds of conduct to such an extent that the individual regards the moral rules in question as 'self-evident' or '*a priori*'; (*c*) the attempt to substitute a 'scientific' moral criterion for the 'hedonistic calculus' of empirical Utilitarianism. A few words must be said on each of these.

The first point in Spencer's Ethics which it seems desirable to notice is, then, his explanation of the idea of moral authority in general or of the idea of duty. In so far as he refers the idea of obligation to the inherited effect of 'sanctions'—social, political, and religious—his doctrine is of course simply the doctrine of all sceptical Moralists from the time of Thrasymachus to that of Mandeville, with the addition that the idea is supposed to be impressed on the consciousness of the individual by heredity as well as by tradition. All that has been said in previous pages in defence of the idea that our judgements of value are rational judgements might be repeated here as an argument against the theory which makes the idea of duty or good into a merely subjective, emotional susceptibility. The theory, if it were true, is one which undermines the belief which it professes to explain. In so far as a man comes to believe that the feeling of awe with which he contemplates the idea of failure in duty is due *solely* to the inherited terror of now powerless chiefs or of ghosts which no longer walk the earth, that terror must tend to vanish. We know as a matter of fact that it persists in persons who are quite free from superstitious terrors about the dangers of ancestral displeasure. I know that my idea of Right is not

such a merely subjective terror by immediate reflection, just as I know that my idea of Causality or Number is not a mere subjective tendency to expect the recurrence of sensations resembling those which have previously been associated in my experience, or to escape the penalties which failure to repeat the multiplication table correctly may at one time have incurred.

But the imaginary police theory is only one half of Spencer's doctrine. It is, after all only the 'compulsiveness' attaching to the ordinary idea of duty which is traced to what Mandeville would have called the 'political progeny of prejudice begat on pride.' The idea of authority is, it would appear, something distinct from the idea of 'compulsiveness,' and for this idea Spencer has no strictly evolutionary justification. The idea of duty in general is obtained by abstraction from particular feelings which carry with them the idea of authority. What these feelings are, may be best described in Herbert Spencer's own words:—

'We have seen that during the progress of animate existence, the later-evolved, more compound and more representative feelings, serving to adjust the conduct to more distant and general needs, have all along had an authority as guides superior to that of the earlier and simpler feelings—excluding cases in which these last are intense. This superior authority, unrecognizable by lower types of creatures which cannot generalize, and little recognizable by primitive men, who have but feeble powers of generalization, has become distinctly recognized as civilization and accompanying mental development have gone on. Accumulated experiences have produced the consciousness that guidance by feelings which refer to remote and general results, is usually more conducive to welfare than guidance by feelings to be immediately gratified. For what is the common character of the feelings that prompt honesty, truthfulness, diligence, providence, &c. which men habitually find to be better prompters than the appetites and simple impulses? They are all complex, re-representative feelings, occupied with the future rather than the present. The idea of authoritativeness has therefore come to be connected with feelings having these traits: the implication being that the lower and simpler feelings are without authority. And this idea of authoritativeness is one element in the abstract consciousness of duty[1].'

[1] *Data of Ethics*, pp. 125-6.

The main difficulty which one feels in criticizing this account is the extreme uncertainty in which Spencer leaves us as to what he supposes 'authority' to mean. If he means by it anything like what ordinary people mean, one has only to say that he admits his opponent's case. The process by which we have come to attach the idea of authority to certain acts rather than to certain other acts is in a sense—not very lucidly or convincingly, it must be said—on Herbert Spencer's premisses explained. But the explanation is one which postulates the idea of authority already in the minds of those who feel it. For what after all is it that the course of Evolution has taught the human race? 'That guidance by feelings which refer to remote and general results, is usually more conducive to welfare than guidance by feelings to be immediately gratified.' 'Conducive to welfare'—but whose welfare? If one's own, it is clear, as is frequently admitted by Spencer, that, though an enlightened Ethic will recognize a moral obligation in the precepts of Prudence, it is specially to rules of conduct which conduce to other people's welfare that this idea of authority inherently attaches. And what is meant by saying that 'authority' attaches to such rules; that we think that they ought to be obeyed? It is true that the authority which is ascribed to these rules is not, according to Spencer, ultimate: it belongs to them as means to general welfare. General welfare, then, is recognized as something which *ought* to be promoted, as the rational *end* of action, as possessing ultimate *value*. But why should we be guided by feelings conducive to other people's welfare? From other parts of Spencer's writings, it would seem that the answer would be 'from sympathy.' This explanation may possibly explain the fact that some people do actually, in a greater or less degree, promote other people's welfare: it cannot explain why they should feel bound to do so, whether they feel naturally inclined to do so or not. It cannot explain why sympathy should be regarded as a 'better guide' than selfishness—which is the fact of consciousness which presumably Spencer set out to explain. If all that Spencer means is that this rational idea or category of Rightness has only gradually developed, and that social pressure of various kinds

has been one of the conditions of its development (just as Arithmetic was developed under pressure of commercial necessities), there is nothing in his contention which any modern Idealist would wish to deny. With regard to all Spencer's explanations of the idea of duty in general, it is difficult to make out whether he himself thinks that he is explaining it or explaining it away—whether the explanation is put forth as a vindication or as a refutation of its validity.

There are, indeed, parts of Spencer's writings—especially the section of his *Principles of Ethics* styled *Justice*—in which he would seem almost prepared to admit the simple, *a priori* unanalysable character of the idea of Right. The treatment which he there bestows on that virtue would seem to suggest that he recognizes the rule of Justice—on account of its supreme conduciveness to pleasure, which is with him the ultimate end—as an *a priori* dictate of Reason. It is not easy to believe that the following passage can really have been written by the author of *The Data of Ethics*:—

'But what is the ultimate meaning of expediency? When it is proposed to guide ourselves empirically, towards what are we to guide ourselves? If our course must always be determined by the merits of the case, by what are the merits to be judged? "By conduciveness to the welfare of society, or the good of the community," will be the answer. It will not be replied that the merit to be estimated means increase of misery; it will not be replied that it means increase of a state of indifference, sensational and emotional; and it must therefore be replied that it means increase of happiness[1]. By implication, if not avowedly, greatest happiness is the thing to be achieved by public action, or private action, or both. But now whence comes this postulate? Is it an inductive truth? Then where and by whom has the induction been drawn? Is it a truth of experience derived from careful observations? Then what are the observations, and when was there generalized that vast mass of them on which all politics and morals should be built? Not only are there no such experiences, no such observations, no such induction, but it is impossible that any should be assigned. Even were the intuition universal, which it is not (for it has been denied by ascetics in all ages and places, and is demurred

[1] On the Logic of this argument I have commented below, p. 378.

to by an existing school of moralists), it would still have no better warrant than that of being an immediate *dictum* of consciousness[1].'

And Spencer goes on to show that the greatest happiness principle becomes meaningless without the *addendum* 'one person's happiness . . . is counted for exactly as much as another's.' 'Hence the Benthamite theory of morals and politics,' he admits, 'posits this as a fundamental self-evident truth[2].'

The passage is doubly inconsistent with the Spencer of the *Data*, for, in the first place, in *Justice* the ultimate end of conduct becomes, not as in the *Data*, that mere 'welfare' in general (no matter whose welfare it is) which the 're-representative feelings' promote, but the promotion of Justice, which is something quite other and possibly inconsistent with the promotion of general welfare—the rule that 'Every man is to do what he wills, provided he infringes not the freedom of any other man.' And secondly, it is not now mere 'feelings' to which ultimate moral authority attaches, but a dictate of Reason which, we may suppose, recognizes that these feelings have a preferential claim to respect. And this dictate of Reason implies a distinct and analysable idea of 'rightness' or 'goodness,' for 'consciousness' cannot tell us that it is right to be just unless we know what 'right' means. Such an idea of authority cannot be distilled by any process of abstraction from 're-representative feelings,' unless those feelings are already invested with this idea of authority by something which is not feeling. Here the great Evolutionist appears in the light of a rationalistic Moralist, and one feels for the moment tempted to see in the passage the influence of some deceased and deified ancestor whose ghost, still haunting his descendant, has compelled him to do sacrifice to the idols which the *Synthetic Philosophy* was, once for all, to have demolished.

But such an interpretation as I have suggested would probably be unjust. After all, it would seem that these *a priori* beliefs are not really *a priori*. They are *a priori* to the individual

[1] *Justice* (*Principles of Morality*, Vol. II. pt. iv), pp. 57, 58.

[2] Ib

but *a posteriori* to the race. They are due to accumulated experiences. But experiences of what? The rightness or authority of any course of action cannot be 'experienced.' At most it would only be a belief in the conduciveness of this rule of Justice to tribal welfare which could be experienced, and so transmitted by inheritance and natural selection. We think we ought to speak the truth, we know not why: but the evolutionary philosopher is in a position to tell us that originally our ancestors discovered that truth-speaking was conducive to the preservation and welfare of the individual and the race, and natural selection has killed off those individuals and those races which were most incurably given to lying—a very bold hypothesis in view of the habits of some surviving races. This at least is the explanation which Spencer gives of the apparently *a priori* character of other axiomatic truths. The question whether two and two make four or five was to our remote ancestors an open question to be decided by experience; but from constant familiarity with cases in which two and two were found to make four they eventually bequeathed to their posterity a physiological incapacity for supposing they made five, so that to us the idea that they make four has become a logical necessity of thought. Whether Spencer himself would have attempted to extend this doctrine as to the source of our belief in axioms to the fundamental moral truth that it is right to promote general welfare, and how he would have done it, it is impossible to say; but on the assumption that this attempt would have been made, a few remarks on the Spencerian theory of axioms may not be out of place.

A full examination of the theory would evolve an elaborate metaphysical discussion. It may be enough to point out that it is a theory which, though it holds out an attractive prospect of reconciling the empirical with the *a priori* School of Metaphysics, really undermines all our confidence in the validity of knowledge. Every inference that we make implies certain laws of thought or principles of reasoning. If these laws are really no necessities of thought but mere inherited results of accidental experiences, it is possible that they are untrustworthy. To believe in the law of contradiction may at one time, under

a particular set of circumstances, have aided our ancestors in the struggle for existence; as on Spencer's view, and on any possible view, has undoubtedly been the case with many beliefs not objectively true. The more clear-sighted thinkers who discerned its falsity were, it is conceivable, killed off by natural selection: while, as to ourselves, we have now become physiologically incapable of discovering the ancestral mistake. That being so, we are compelled to accept Spencer's theory about ethical and other axioms (which professes to rest upon clear thinking); but if belief in the law of contradiction may really be false, all the arguments upon which Spencer's theory rests may likewise be untrustworthy and the theory may be false after all, no matter how little we can help believing in it. True, it is assumed that the beliefs were engendered by accumulated experiences of actual fact, but then these experiences were partial and local. Our race may have originated in parts of the world in which the law of contradiction happened to prevail, and which contained no circles with segments greater than their arcs. But the deep-sea regions revealed to modern explorers might teem with such circles, and yet the explorers would be *ex hypothesi* incapable of perceiving the fact[1]. Spencer's theory involves us in hopeless scepticism, as does every theory which attempts to account by experience for the principles of thought, which are implied in every step of the process by which experience itself is turned into knowledge.

A theory which leads to such results when applied to the ultimate bases of knowledge is equally incompetent to account for the ultimate basis of our moral beliefs. In this case no doubt the same easy *reductio ad absurdum* is not possible. It is not so easy to reduce to self-contradiction the theorist who professes to explain away the idea of duty as the theorist who explains away, while professing to explain, the law of contradiction. For we can argue without assuming the truth of moral principles, though we cannot argue without assuming the axioms of thought. But we can point out that the two kinds of axiomatic truth really rest upon the same basis. And it is, as

[1] I borrow this line of argument from Professor Cook Wilson's brilliant inaugural lecture on 'Mr. Spencer's Theory of Axioms.'

a rule, fairly easy to show that the critic who tries to explain away moral obligation has the idea, and more or less completely acts upon it, as much as the people whom he criticizes. Herbert Spencer himself is constantly using the terms 'higher' and 'lower,' 'ethically higher and lower' in a way which would be meaningless if he really meant them in the evolutionary sense—that is to say, more 'integrated,' more differentiated, more complex—and when he argues in support of his view that pleasure is the ultimate good or end, he shows how impossible it is to think without implying the idea of Value. His judgement that pleasure is the sole good is, in short, like all ultimate moral principles, an *a priori* judgement of value, true or false. At bottom it is probable that nothing was further from Herbert Spencer's intentions than to explain away the ultimate authority of the Moral Law. He did not see that what he offered as an explanation and vindication of that authority must really have the effect of undermining it.

IV

Considered as an attempt to explain the idea of validity or self-evidencing authority attaching to our intuitions in general and to every one of them, Spencer's theory must be treated as part and parcel of a metaphysical system which there are good metaphysical grounds for rejecting. But if the theory is put forward simply as an explanation of particular 'intuitions' in the popular sense of the word, of rules of conduct which have actually presented themselves to particular races and individuals as self-evidently binding, it may at once be admitted that there may be considerable truth in it. No accumulation of experiences, personal or ancestral, could ever generate the idea of 'good' or 'value' in a consciousness which did not possess it: but, given the existence of such a concept (which, of course, does not express itself in an abstract form prior to particular judgements of value but is implied in the simplest of them), the varying experience, environment, and intellectual development of races and individuals unquestionably does and must explain why the idea of value has come to attach itself to particular kinds of

conduct rather than to others. It is undoubtedly true, as Spencer has so exhaustively shown in his *Principles of Sociology*—a much more interesting and important work than the *Principles of Ethics*—that it is the necessity for military efficiency which accounts for the high estimate placed by some races upon such qualities as courage, endurance, and submissiveness to chiefs, and for their contempt for the more amiable and the more industrial virtues, while peaceful tribes have attached a high value to truth and a very low one to discipline or obedience. The qualities were originally valued because they were felt to be conducive to tribal Well-being, and afterwards came to be valued for their own sake without any such conscious regard to tribal Well-being. All this is undeniable, and there is little in it that can be claimed as the monopoly of 'evolutionary Ethics.' Essentially it is the commonplace of all pre-evolutionary Utilitarianism, and will not now be denied by non-hedonistic Moralists who have recognized the slow development of Morality; though these last might insist that even very barbaric ideals of tribal Well-being contain an element which goes beyond the conception of a 'greatest quantum of pleasure' for the tribe. Only two elements in this explanation of apparently intuitive beliefs are new. Firstly, the theory of natural selection is held to explain how the tendency to practise and approve conduct conducive to personal or tribal Well-being was strengthened by the dying-out of individuals or of tribes which did not accommodate themselves to the socially beneficial ideal. And secondly, there is the idea that moral beliefs have been transmitted, not merely by education and the influence of a continuous social environment, but also by direct inheritance.

That there is some truth in both these new ideas is not impossible. It is probable that some Evolutionists are disposed greatly to over-emphasize the influence of natural selection in accounting for the actual history of moral ideas, especially in the later stages of that history. If Biology now finds that it cannot get on without the idea of 'quasi-purposive' behaviour in accounting for the growth of the individual organisms, still more must quasi-purposive action be admitted, even where we cannot think of directly and consciously purposive action, as an

important factor in social Evolution [1]. Still it is, no doubt, true that Nature, in primitive stages of Evolution, has eliminated the exceptionally cowardly and, at a later period, the phenomenally idle and imprudent: and that in all ages Society has deliberately eliminated some few of those whose ideals were most conspicuously ill-adapted for social life. Still more important has been the influence of the struggle between tribes in promoting the survival of those whose ideals were most fitted in early times for conquest, and in later times for a combination of industrial with military efficiency: though nobody has pointed out more forcibly than Spencer himself in his eloquent diatribes against Militarism how little the code of conduct that promotes survival can be regarded as identical with a code of morals possessing permanent and absolute validity.

The other distinctively 'evolutionary' doctrine—the propagation of moral ideas by inheritance—involves much more difficult and debatable questions. The scientific world has not generally accepted Spencer's doctrine that acquired moral beliefs can be inherited. The question is really in large measure a physiological one, upon which it would ill become the layman in such matters to dogmatize. I may perhaps be allowed to remark that superficial observation of the facts would seem to suggest that, while certain moral capacities or incapacities can scarcely be separated from those physical and intellectual characteristics which are undoubtedly inherited, it is questionable whether the fully-developed moral belief or 'intuition' could be transmitted to offspring apart from the influence of education and environ-

[1] 'When we say that life consists of purposive action and development, we do not mean that there is a conscious and purposive application, *ab extra*, of mechanical force by some independent agency. Such a conclusion would only signify the reintroduction, under another form, of the old mechanical theory. We mean rather to record that we have observed phenomena which present no analogy to the mechanical or chemical action on each other of independent atoms, and which do present a certain but very limited resemblance to the action of a number of intelligent individuals working together to fulfil a common end.' Haldane, *The Pathway to Reality*, I. pp. 243, 244. The earlier chapters of Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* may be referred to for a brilliant demonstration of the impossibility of accounting for the instincts of animals and the quasi-instructive ideas and habits of men by natural selection alone.

ment. Here, as in the matter of physical habits of various kinds in the lower animals (even those most nearly approximating to mere 'reflexes'), what is inherited is probably a capacity for acquiring or being taught rather than any actual moral belief. So far the Spencerian theory has contributed an element to the explanation of moral evolution, though it is an element which really adds very little beyond a change of phraseology to the accounts of ethical development which might have been given, and were given, before the publication of the Darwinian theory[1].

There is a constant disposition to forget that the 'struggle for existence' as a fact was a well-known element in human history from the very earliest times. The originality of Darwin's theory consisted in seeing its bearing upon the 'origin of species.' The struggle for existence certainly does not explain the 'origin of Morality' in the sense in which it helps to explain the 'origin of species.' At most it represents one of the complex forces which go to explain the fact of moral progress. It contributes an element to ethical history; but does it add anything to ethical theory? To a very limited extent I think that it does. It adds some shade of additional presumption to the other grounds which may be given for assuming that a rule of conduct which is *de facto* established in any society must have its origin in some consideration of social convenience, and that its observance must be in some way beneficial to that society. And, therefore, when we find ourselves feeling a strong repugnance to certain kinds of conduct, even though the repugnance be one which we find it difficult to justify on any rational principle, it is reasonable to assume that it probably possesses some utilitarian justification, which should make us unwilling to act against such an instinctive repugnance, unless we are very sure of our ground. Neither on Spencer's principles nor on any other can it be contended that this consideration compels us to acquiesce without question in each and every apparently intuitive disposition to approve or to

[1] The question turns to some extent upon the view that is taken of Weissmann's theory of the non-inheritance of acquired characteristics, upon the truth of which I express no opinion. But of course the inheritance of acquired physical modifications does not prove the inheritance of acquired beliefs.

condemn any kind of conduct. For, though the instinct may have had its justification in some supposed social utility, that utility may have been entirely imaginary. Many of the strongest ethical beliefs of savages are based upon the supposed connexion between various acts and divine favour or vengeance. Sometimes, no doubt, there may be a real utility in the custom or practice approved, although the utility may not be what the savage himself supposes; as for instance it is possible that the custom of Exogamy, resting upon a complex of totemistic ideas, has prevented the marriage of near kin and increased the vigour of the tribe[1]. But it would be a monstrous assumption, though it is one which some evolutionary writers go very near to countenancing, to lay it down that this must always be the case. Not all qualities or tendencies or inherited 'variations' of a species or group promote survival. A species may survive because some of its qualities promote survival in spite of qualities which, taken by themselves, would tend to its extinction. In the same way it is obvious that there are many of our inherited tendencies and traditional beliefs which have not promoted survival, or which have even tended to extinction without actually producing it. There can never have been the slightest social advantage in the practice of killing children who cut their lower teeth first rather than any other children. No belief could possibly have militated more against survival than the belief prevalent among Australian natives that every death, not due to obvious violence or accident, must be the result of witchcraft and must be avenged by the death of the bewitcher[2]. The presumption in favour of the established or transmitted belief may, therefore, be rebutted by sufficient evidence of its inutility. And it is fully admitted by Herbert Spencer himself that a

[1] It is true that it was at first only kin on the mother's side who were forbidden to intermarry, but it seems probable that, as the primitive clan-system broke down, the prohibition was extended to all kinsmen.

[2] Spencer and Gillan, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 46–8. The writers remark, 'It need hardly be pointed out what a potent element this custom has been in keeping down the numbers of the tribe.' I suppose there might be conditions under which a limitation of numbers might help the survival of a species in competition with other species. But this would be no argument for the general adoption of a custom tending to such limitation.

belief which once had a relative justification in real social utility may outlive its justification. A large part of his voluminous writings are, in fact, devoted to the demonstration, with impressive if wearisome iteration, of the social inutility of the beliefs and ideas which modern industrial societies have inherited from societies accustomed to habitual militancy. It cannot therefore be rational to regard these inherited 'intuitions' as final guides to conduct. If Evolution has supplied us with a new moral criterion, it is not to be found in this doctrine of inherited intuitions. The doctrine, in so far as it has a sound physiological basis, can at most only slightly reinforce that presumption in favour of established Morality from which the sane Moralist of any school sets out. So far I have argued on Spencer's own hedonistic principles. From the point of view taken up in previous chapters, we should further have to admit that a practice or inherited belief may promote survival, and so, ultimately, increase of pleasure, and still not be approved by the developed moral consciousness. To us the quality of life and of pleasure is important and not merely its quantity. If Morality did in a sense come into existence to promote life, it exists (as Aristotle would say) for good life, and good life does not mean merely pleasant life.

V

But Herbert Spencer is not content with giving a psychological explanation either of our moral ideas in general or of particular moral rules in detail. His writings, at least his earlier ethical writings, represent that Evolution has actual guidance to bestow as to what Morality ought to be now. The third and the most characteristic feature of Spencer's ethical system is the attempt to substitute a 'scientific' for an 'empirical' Utilitarianism—to substitute an appeal to rules which the course of Evolution has impressed upon us, and thereby proved to be conditions of Well-being, for the direct empirical calculation of pleasure and pain adopted by the older Utilitarians.

Spencer agrees with the Utilitarians in regarding pleasure as the ultimate end of human life. A word must be said as to

the method by which he thinks he has proved this fundamental tenet. He habitually assumes that the only alternative to accepting pleasure as the ultimate test of conduct is to treat pain as the ultimate end, or else a neutral state which is neither pleasurable nor painful. Ridiculing Carlyle's substitution of 'blessedness' for 'pleasure,' he says:

'Obviously, the implication is that blessedness is not a kind of happiness; and this implication at once suggests the question —What mode of feeling is it? If it is a state of consciousness at all, it is necessarily one of three states—painful, indifferent, or pleasurable. Does it leave the possessor at the zero point of sentiency? Then it leaves him just as he would be if he had not got it. Does it not leave him at the zero point? Then it must leave him below zero or above zero![1]'

It is really difficult to exhaust the logical fallacies of this reasoning. In the first place there is the assumption that 'a kind of happiness' is the same thing as 'happiness'; and that, if Carlyle had admitted that 'a kind of happiness' is good, he would have had to admit that all kinds of happiness (by which of course Spencer means pleasure) are good. Secondly, there is the assumption that there is nothing in consciousness but feeling, and that therefore it must be some characteristic of feeling—to the total exclusion of will and thought, which must possess intrinsic value. Thirdly, there is the assumption that feelings have no content—that they are simply pleasurable, painful, or neutral, and nothing else—so that, if 'blessedness' were admitted to be neither pleasurable nor painful, it would leave the possessor 'just as he would be if he had not got it.' The same naïve assumption—that pleasures have no content—prevents Spencer from recognizing the possible alternative that the intrinsically desirable state of consciousness might be differentiated from others by some criterion quite other than its pleasurableness or painfulness; so that either all the desirable states might be pleasurable and yet not preferred simply on account of their pleasurableness, or all might even (as a logical possibility) be painful or neutral, and yet not preferred because painful or neutral; or again the line between the desirable

[1] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 41.

and undesirable might wholly cut across the lines which divide the pleasant from the neutral and the neutral from the painful, and include some pleasurable, some painful, and some neutral states, or states in which there entered elements of pain as well as of pleasure. Elsewhere [1] he assumes that because he has shown the difficulty or unreasonableness of denying that 'pleasure somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an inexpugnable element of the conception' of a desirable state of feeling, he has shown that pleasure is the good and the whole good, and that there is no other good but pleasure.

Except that his method of arguing in favour of it is rather worse than that of less 'scientific' Hedonists, Spencer's position is so far the same as theirs. But while the ordinary Utilitarian is contented to trust to experience—his own experience, the experience of others, the recorded experience of the race—for discovering how a maximum of pleasure is to be obtained, Spencer believes himself to have discovered in the laws of Evolution a scientific criterion of Morality, which will prove not only that such and such kinds of conduct will actually cause pleasure, but that they and no others *must* cause pleasure. What this criterion is had better be stated in Spencer's own words, lest the reader unacquainted with the *Synthetic Philosophy* should remain unconvinced of the accuracy of my representation:—

'If we substitute for the word Pleasure the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there, and if we substitute for the word Pain the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and to keep out; we see at once that, if the states of consciousness which a creature endeavours to maintain are the correlatives of injurious actions, and if the states of consciousness which it endeavours to expel are the correlatives of beneficial actions, it must quickly disappear through persistence in the injurious and avoidance of the beneficial. In other words, those races of beings only can have survived in which, on the average, agreeable or desired feelings went along with activities conducive to the maintenance of life, while disagreeable and habitually-avoided feelings went along with activities directly or indirectly

[1] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 46.

destructive of life; and there must ever have been, other things equal, the most numerous and long-continued survivals among races in which these adjustments of feelings to actions were the best, tending ever to bring about perfect adjustment[1].'

Instead, therefore, of consulting experience to find out what rules have actually promoted happiness, we must study the laws of human life, individual and social—physiological, psychological, sociological, and ascertain what are the conditions which have actually promoted survival, it being assumed that whatever produces survival will also produce a balance of pleasure. These laws being ascertained, we can feel sure that it is only by obedience to them that further progress can be secured. The course which calculations of Utility, Reason, common sense might prescribe as most likely to secure happiness must, it would appear, be resolutely set aside in favour of the principles resulting from the study of animal and human evolution. An exhaustive criticism of the theory would require a volume. The following may be briefly suggested as some of its chief difficulties:—

(1) In the first place a few preliminary remarks may be made with regard to Herbert Spencer's fundamental assumptions:

(*a*) The definition above given of pleasure would seem to commit the author to the hedonistic Psychology, which is elsewhere very decidedly repudiated. The possibility of real Altruism, when it conflicts with Egoism, is absolutely denied if we necessarily aim at expelling from consciousness every feeling but those which are pleasant, and seek to retain those only which are pleasant and in so far as they are pleasant. If sympathy with another's pain be painful, it would follow that we must necessarily seek to expel it from consciousness, as soon as it appears; and there are generally quicker ways of effecting that expulsion than the relief of the suffering which occasions it. The only way of escape is to say that sympathy with pain is always pleasant, but Spencer shows no disposition to adopt such a mode of bridging over the gulf between Altruism and Egoism.

(*b*) The principle here put forward is quite definitely a different principle from that of reliance upon inherited intuitions, which

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, § 124, repeated in *The Data of Ethics*, p. 79.

has already been explained and criticized. It cannot surely be contended that the 'intuitions' of every ordinary society—even the most advanced—are completely in harmony with the results of the studies recommended by our author. Indeed, much of Spencer's book is devoted to declamations against the ethical code, commonly accepted on the basis of Intuition, which he assumes to be that of his own society. When the excessive Benevolence to which large numbers of persons feel intuitively prompted (whether they act upon such promptings is not to the point) comes into collision with the stern, and in the main sensible, Charity Organization principles recommended by Spencer, or the promptings of Loyalty with the theory of extremely limited State-action which he supposes to result from the study of Evolution, what principle is to arbitrate between them? Have we not, on Spencerian principles, as much right to say that our intuitions represent, and must represent, the true lines of social health, imprinted on us by natural selection, as he has to appeal to the results of his studies? As a matter of fact, Spencer himself usually appeals to experience, private and historical, to show that the societies which have obeyed the laws which he recommends have been happy, and those which have disobeyed them have been miserable. Here the appeal is after all made to the much-decried hedonistic calculus.

(*c*) The alleged concomitance between tendency to survival and pleasure is, in the extreme and absolute form given to it by Spencer, a highly questionable doctrine. It is proved only by his favourite logical expedient—treating contrary propositions as contradictories, and assuming that a middle is excluded when it is not excluded. Pleasure, it is argued, must be the invariable concomitant of beneficial actions because, if pain were their invariable concomitant, the race would perish. It may be observed further that even so the proposition is only made out by the assumption that men and animals always aim at pleasure, which in the case of men is inconsistent with Spencer's own admission of Altruism, and in the case of animals is inconsistent with the existence of instinct. No doubt the performance of instinctive actions gives the animal some pleasure, but it is not proved that they are always pleasant on the whole. Some

instincts of animals, as Spencer himself has shown, lead them to self-sacrifice: and from a purely biological point of view it may be urged that the 'sociality' of animals—their tendency to perform instinctive actions which do not give pleasure to the individual—is quite as important a factor in determining the survival of race or group as the instincts which give pleasure to the individual [1].

If Spencer contends that the pleasure which is necessarily the concomitant of beneficial actions need only be the pleasure of the race, the fact of such invariable concomitance is not proved by the Spencerian Psychology. If an action beneficial to the race may be performed though painful to the individual, we cannot assume that, even if the action produced more pain than pleasure to the race, it would cease to be performed by the individual. It might conceivably be productive of pain to the race, though conducive to survival [2]. Finally, to return to my main point, the fact that a concomitance between beneficial actions and painful ones would lead to extermination does not prove the *invariable* concomitance between pleasure and beneficial action. For, be it remembered, Spencer has to establish not merely that actions which produce survival produce some pleasure (on the whole, no doubt, with some reservations, a probable statement), but that they produce the greatest pleasure that is possible. Only if that is proved, can we accept the fact that a race has survived by the observance of certain rules as a proof that it has got in that way a maximum of possible pleasure, and should therefore be imitated by us. It is possible that with less survival (e.g. a smaller population or absorption in a conquering people) there might have been more pleasure. Or again there is the possibility that two sets of rules might have been equally conducive to survival, but the one which was not adopted might have produced the larger amount of pleasure.

(*d*) If we return once more to the individual and assume

[1] Cf. Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*, p. 79 sq.

[2] Von Hartmann has contended that this is actually the case with the human race as a whole, and he has certainly accumulated much evidence which should make us hesitate to assume that survival always implies predominance of pleasure over pain.

Spencer to mean that life-preserving actions are always pleasant to the individual, we are met with the obvious cases in which what is immediately pleasant is clearly not conducive to survival—poisons for instance. If it is said (as is pointed out sometimes by Spencer) that the pleasure is sooner or later followed by pain, the immediate pleasantness cannot be taken as any proof that the action is beneficial: for, however long we wait, the ill consequences may still lie in the future. Thus we are thrown back upon the empirical weighing of pains against pleasures before the Spencerian rule can yield any guidance—the very calculation which 'Scientific Utilitarianism' was to supersede. We cannot tell whether the taking of poison be good for welfare or not without an appeal to experience with all its uncertainties.

(2) If the dogma about the concomitance between pleasure and life-preserving action is not true wholly and without exception, or if it is true only in a sense which is nugatory, it can hardly be fitted to supply the basis of a strictly 'scientific' criterion which is to end the painful uncertainties of the hedonistic calculus. But let us provisionally assume its truth and ask whether it will work.

Spencer seeks to establish an equation between the two categories, 'pleasant actions' and 'actions conducive to the welfare of the organism.' But it is never quite apparent in which way he means us to apply his formula. Are we first to observe for ourselves what things are immediately pleasant, and then to infer that these must be in accordance with the laws of the organism? Or are we first to discover the laws of the organism, and then assume that their observance will secure the greatest attainable pleasure? If the first alternative be adopted, we have already indicated the difficulty. The doctrine, if true at all, can only be true on the understanding that 'pleasant' be understood to include remote as well as immediate consequences. And then we are reduced once more to that tedious process of accumulating experiences of pleasant and painful effects, and balancing the one against the other, from which the scientific clue to Utility promised deliverance. Are we then to shut our eyes to direct experience, to get at the general laws of the

organism, and assume that whatever is in accordance with them will be conducive to a balance of pleasure on the whole? The theory can hardly be tested without recognizing a distinction between the laws of the individual and the social organism which in this connexion Spencer himself rarely makes. Let us deal with the individual organism first. We are then to assume that whatever is in accordance with the laws of the individual organism is conducive on the whole to the pleasure of that organism. It may, indeed, be asked how we are to ascertain what are the laws of the organism except by interrogating experience. It may be asked whether these 'laws of the organism' are not very largely the result of those calculations of pleasant and painful consequences which Spencer deprecates? But let us waive that point, and assume that we have arrived somehow at 'laws of the individual organism' which are independent of any empirical calculation of the greater pleasantness or painfulness on the whole of different courses of action.

Where are we to look for such laws? As far as I know, Spencer has only given us one single example of an ethical truth which results from the study of the laws of the individual organism, but which might otherwise have escaped the rude methods of empirical Utilitarianism. It is a law of the organism, we are told, that any unnatural or abnormal stimulation of an organ must be followed by a reaction. The stimulation is pleasant, but the subsequent reaction must bring with it in the long run, not merely pain, but pain (or loss of pleasure) which outweighs the pleasure. Here then at last we have reached a valuable practical conclusion. The mere empirical Utilitarian might have fallen into the mistake of supposing that, because the moderate use of wine, beer, spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco, and snuff seems to bring with it present pleasure and apparent gain in efficiency without any appreciable loss, or a loss apparently compensated by its beneficial effects, such moderate use may be permitted. But here the evolutionary Moralist, duly trained in biological and sociological studies, steps in and warns him of his fatal mistake. The bad effects may escape the observation not merely of the superficial observer, but of the scientific Physician; yet they must be there all the same, and

must outweigh the good effects. Amid all our difficulties in discovering the actual precepts of the new 'scientific' Hedonism, here there is one solid, tangible result—evolutionary Ethics are teetotal, and they condemn tea, coffee, tobacco, and snuff.

But just at the moment at which we seem to have reached a result of practical value, we are suddenly confronted with another peculiar feature of the Spencerian system—the distinction between 'absolute' and 'relative' Ethics. Absolute Ethics prescribe the conduct which is conducive to life in circumstances of perfect adaptation—perfect adaptation of the individual to his environment. Relative Ethics deal with the conduct which is suitable to such and such an individual in a society at a given stage of imperfect adaptation. Nothing is absolutely right but what promotes pleasure pure and simple without any admixture whatever of pain. Relative Ethics often prescribe what is really only the less of two evils. It is only a perfect society that can observe the counsels of perfection enjoined by absolute Ethics. A single cup of the weakest tea administered to an individual in a state of perfect health in a perfectly adapted society dwelling in a perfectly adapted physical environment would necessarily disturb the delicately adjusted harmony, and involve a diminution of pleasure on the whole. But in our present state of imperfect adaptation, when we have to breathe contaminated air, to lead sedentary lives, to make unwholesomely exacting efforts physical and mental, and so on, the gain may often be greater than the loss. The Ethics adapted to our present imperfect state positively prescribe the moderate use of all the stimulants interdicted by 'scientific' Hedonism. What then, it may be asked, is the use of absolute Ethics, if after all we have to depend for practical guidance upon relative Ethics which are just as empirical as the much-decried 'empirical Utilitarianism'? Herbert Spencer's system of Moral Philosophy will be of use when we reach a social millennium—not till then. Nor do absolute Ethics throw a single ray of light upon the path by which that millennium is to be reached. I will not here examine the grounds of Spencer's optimistic assumption that we are tending to a state of things in which, with complete adaptation and adjustment, absolute Ethics will become available. Whether an adjustment so com-

plete that an animal might go from birth to death without suffering a single pang is physiologically possible, even barring those unpreventable accidents which, it is admitted, will still occur in Spencer's evolutionary Paradise—whether birth, child-bearing, or death, for instance, will be rendered painless by increased 'adaptation'—may well be doubted. At all events, such a state of things is so remote from the world that we know that a code of Ethics appropriate to it must be completely unavailable[1].

We have seen that neither of the two possible interpretations of the Spencerian equation (pleasurable = healthful) can be got to yield us real guidance. The truth is that Spencer himself adopts whichever criterion happens to supply the best support for the particular article of his own practical code on which he is insisting for the moment—a code which he has really arrived at by methods quite unconnected with the evolutionary principles which he recommends. When he is protesting against the excesses of 'Altruism' or of traditional Asceticism, we are told that it is a mistake to look with suspicion upon the immediately pleasant—to reserve, for instance, the pleasantest mouthful to the last—because pleasure is the concomitant of healthy discharge of function. On the other hand, when he wants to find weapons against the short-sighted Utilitarianism which bases its ethical or political teaching upon the human experience of a few hundred or thousand years, we are told that this empirical guidance by direct observation of immediate or even proximate pleasures is worthless. However undeniable the immmediate benefits resulting from factory inspection, free libraries, compulsory education, and the like, we are merely laying up for ourselves a harvest of social misery in the remote future, when Evolution will be justified of her children; and our descendants will be punished for our disregard of laws of the social organism only disclosed to those whose study of Sociology begins with an investigation of the structure of the Amoeba and the strifes of

[1] That social Evolution leads to increased social differentiation, and so multiplies occasions of conflict between the tendencies of individuals and between classes and societies, has been maintained by Simmel, and he has much to say in defence of his thesis.

the ant. It is true that, if the equation were really well established, it would make no difference which side of it we adopted as our working guide. But as any superiority which the theory can possess over commonplace Utilitarianism must lie in the fact that our judgements as to what is really pleasant in the long run and as to what is really healthful are liable to error, it may make a great difference in practice which side we take as the index to the other. As to when we are to infer the really beneficial from the apparently pleasant, and when we are to infer the eventually pleasant from the laws of the organism, the theory itself will supply us with no guidance.

VI

We have so far dealt mainly with the case of the individual organism, and the physiological laws of health undoubtedly supply the nearest approach to the kind of principles of which the scientific Utilitarian is in search: since, though they do not dispense us from the necessity of comparing pleasures and pains, they do undoubtedly supply us at times with the means of anticipating, and thereby of avoiding, pains which might not have foretold their advent to mere empirical observation. But what of the laws of the social organism? There are two main lines of thought running through Spencer's treatment of social and political Ethics. They must be examined separately.

The first is the tendency to find a justification for Individualism in the fact that among animals and men alike development has taken place through a struggle for existence, and the resulting survival of the fittest in accordance with the laws of natural selection and inheritance. Man having so far progressed through the operation of the struggle, it is inferred that the conditions of future survival, health, and development will be the same as they have been in the past; hence any conduct, individual, social, or political, which interferes with this tendency must be bad. And thereupon follow impressive warnings against excessive Altruism, misdirected charity, government interference, Socialism, &c. A full examination of this individualistic tendency of evolutionary Ethics in its bearing upon the question of State interference would be only appropriate in a treatise on Politics.

The best way of dealing with it, so far as it is necessary for our present purpose, will be to admit Spencer's assumptions (large and unsupported as they often are), and insist upon his admissions. It may quite reasonably be contended that, even in dealing with purely animal evolution, Spencer has overlooked the importance of habits of co-operation or sociality in promoting the survival and progress of race or group. Still, he does at times admit that there are traces of co-operation in animal life, and that these have promoted survival. And when he comes to human history, it is conceded that the struggle has never been an unrestricted struggle. Militancy itself—which, in spite of the evolutionary importance of 'struggle,' is Spencer's bugbear—has brought with it increased 'integration,' co-operation, solidarity within the group; and though the growth of Altruism has been checked by the brutalities and cruelties inseparable from militancy, he has shown that, with increasing industrialism, co-operation more and more takes the place of aggression, and conduct becomes more and more altruistic. And, though, in the interests of Altruism itself, conduct can never cease to be largely egoistic, the element of Altruism is increasingly predominant and becomes increasingly compatible with and conducive to the Well-being of Society. Moreover, not only has Altruism gained upon Egoism, but there has been an increasing conciliation between Altruism and Egoism. With the progress of adaptation men have more and more come to take pleasure in things socially beneficial, and with improved social arrangements the welfare of Society has required less and less voluntary self-sacrifice upon the part of the individual, and less and less involuntary elimination of the unfit. Ultimately, there will be a complete coincidence between the precepts of 'Altruism' and those of 'Egoism.' At present nothing is possible but a rough working compromise. Such is Spencer's position. But, at what point, in the present intermediate stage of development, is the compromise to be fixed?

At times he would seem to argue that, because it was essential to wolves and hyenas to struggle for food (though as a matter of fact instinct sets decided limits to aggression on their own species, and the 'struggle' is not for the most part the direct,

violent, and sanguinary struggle between individuals that the word is apt to suggest), therefore there must be no interference with such a struggle in the human species. But it is admitted that the socially beneficial proportion between Altruism and Egoism—the proper balance between co-operation and competition—is not the same at different stages of Evolution. How then can the study of pre-human Evolution tell us what is the proper proportion between the conflicting tendencies in human society, or the study of savage societies supply us with a clue to the solution of modern political and social problems? Interferences with the struggle which were once bad may now be good. How can we tell at what moment interference becomes bad? Is there any guide but empirical observation and calculation, aided by that historical study of countries and races not too unlike our own. which Spencer, by precept and practice, seems to regard as so much less important than the study of the Amazulus and the 'peaceful Arafuras'? As we have had occasion to observe in dealing with other ethical systems, when once an exception is admitted to any ethical criterion, the principle upon which the exception rests really becomes our working criterion. The principle upon which Spencer determines when to obey his absolute Ethics, and when to take the more obvious Utilitarian road to his ultimate end, is really the Utilitarian principle itself. There is no difference in principle (though, of course, there may be wide differences in their empirical justifications) between the protection of life and property, together with the restricted voluntary 'beneficence' for which Spencer contends, and the interferences advocated on utilitarian grounds by the most advanced champions of Socialism. The real grounds of Spencer's objection to interference by individuals or States are derived from the experience which he believes himself to have accumulated in favour of his thesis that as a rule such interference does more harm than good. If he attaches peculiar importance to his studies of savage history, while Utilitarians who have suffered from the defects of an antiquated education believe themselves to have gained more instruction from the experience of ancient or modern civilizations, that is not a difference of principle. No Utilitarian, no Moralist of any school (except those whose

ethical system consists in acting on the inspiration of the moment), denies that it is desirable in choosing the means to our ultimate ends to avail ourselves of wider inductions to check the conclusions to which we might be led by a more limited experience. At all events it is to such calculations that Spencer himself invariably appeals when faced with the question of the limits to which absolute Ethics are to be pushed. Take, for instance, the precept of Justice which assigns to each man the exact equivalent of the work he has done. He allows that the harsh operation of this law upon the sick, the feeble, and the old may be tempered by a considerable amount of voluntary beneficence. There is, so far as it is possible to gather, no warrant for such beneficence in the code of absolute Ethics. And yet Spencer himself allows it. Why? Because he thinks that, when duly restricted to cases of unavoidable misfortune, the immediate pleasure resulting from beneficence outweighs the indirect good which would result from following the teaching of absolute Ethics, and allowing the unrestricted struggle for existence to exterminate those whose extinction by natural law would prove them (under the conditions) unfit to live. It is obvious that exactly the same reasoning will justify any amount of interference with the evolutionary struggle, and with the laws which absolute Ethics derive from it, in all cases where the gain to Society, on the whole, may seem to outweigh any which may be expected to result from the unrestricted struggle.

Between Spencer's system of limited 'interferences' with the struggle for existence and the Socialist's more extended interference there is, I repeat, no difference in principle. For the difference between interference with a code of absolute Ethics by the individual or a philanthropic society and interference by the compulsory action of the State is not a difference of principle but of detail. If the individual may rebel against absolute Ethics when the immediate advantage of doing so seems to outweigh the ultimate gain of obeying them, so may the State. It is idle to say that absolute Ethics forbid compulsory philanthropy; for (if we have the right to rebel against absolute Ethics at all) we have just as much right to rebel against the prohibition of compulsion as we have to rebel against the interdiction

of the beneficence itself, when once experience leads us to believe that the result will be beneficial. To discuss this question of State interference further would lead us too far away from the sphere of moral into that of political Philosophy. I content myself with remarking that the idea that 'compulsion' is avoided by the absence of State interference is a delusion arising from superficial insight into the meaning of words. The workman who is compelled to accept subsistence wages under penalty of starvation is just as much 'compelled' or 'interfered with' as if he were threatened with imprisonment by the State. To suppose that unrestricted freedom of contract can secure real 'equivalence' between work done and reward received is a belief too naïve to require serious refutation. If a Spencerian declares that it would do so in a completely 'adjusted' society, we can only once again remark on the uselessness of absolute Ethics for guidance in that world with which human Morality has to deal.

VII

I have already dwelt upon the number of unreconciled first principles which jostle one another in the Spencerian system. In the part of his *Principles of Morality* styled *Justice* we are introduced to a new one. Here we are presented with an *a priori* principle of 'Justice' which does not claim to be the special product of evolutionary teaching; here it is not even suggested that its self-evident or axiomatic character must ultimately have been produced by accumulated experiences of its beneficial results, though consistency might require that its origin should be thus accounted for. To my own mind the principle that 'every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man[1]' is as self-evidently absurd as to Herbert Spencer's it was self-evidently true. But a proposition may no doubt be really true and really self-evident though some people do not see it. As a criticism of Spencer it will be more to the purpose to point out that it is absolutely inconsistent with the line of thought last dwelt upon;

[1] *Justice*, p. 46. The rule (as Spencer recognized) is identical with that formulated by Kant.

to insist that the fact of the observance of the above principle having been the condition by which social progress has reached its present point can hardly be alleged as establishing a binding rule for our guidance in the future by a writer who is never weary of complaining that it has never actually been observed,—or anything approximating to it, except among a few of the most primitive tribes, still (it may be supposed) in the gruesome condition of 'unstable undifferentiated homogeneity,' such as that which may be supposed to have prevailed among the Pueblos and 'the amiable Ainos.' It might be open to Spencer to contend that in proportion as nations have approximated to this ideal, they have approximated to happiness, and that there has been in the course of Evolution a progressive tendency towards such a state of non-interference. It is doubtful whether, even during the period which lends itself best to such a generalization, the very recent period in which there really was some increasing approximation towards the system of absolute non-interference by one individual with another[1], such an account of the matter would represent anything but a very partial and one-sided view of social development. It is only by arbitrarily restricting the idea of freedom to absence of *governmental* interference that, even from the study of those palmy days of individualistic Liberalism and Manchesterian Economics in which Spencer did his thinking and formed the opinions now stereotyped in some 6,000 pages, something like a case can be made out for such an interpretation of social progress.

And yet a comparative absence of State interference does not really involve even an approximation to the idea of individual freedom being limited solely by the like freedom in others. It is only Spencer's failure to see that the most *laissez-faire* Industrialism necessarily involves quite as much mutual interference as Militarism, though interference of a different kind,

[1] Such a period as this in England may perhaps be very roughly said to have begun in 1688 and ended with the first Factory and Education Acts, though in the economic region the period hardly began till Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* produced a revolution in legislative methods. It is doubtful whether any such tendency can be traced outside the United Kingdom: elsewhere antiquated 'interferences' have generally been abolished only to make way for fresh interferences of another type.

which allows him to suppose that a freedom consistent with the like freedom for every one else can be obtained by leaving the struggle for existence to take its course. The very existence of Capital, as could be demonstrated out of Spencer's own works, involves a radical inequality—a perpetual interference with the rule of equal freedom[1]: for every private appropriation of the instruments of production is so much interference with the right—to Spencer the sacred *a priori* right—of the individual to use his labour to his own advantage. A labourer without Capital is about as free to appropriate the value of his labour as a lame man without crutches is free to walk. In so far as there has been any approximation to such equality of freedom, it has been won by a progressive interference with that law of Nature which, according to Spencer, requires that every individual should be allowed to take the full advantage of his superiority. Spencer's ideal of Justice is one which could only be carried out by pushing the principle not merely of interference, but of State interference, to the point of absolute Socialism. There is a profound truth in the statement that the extremest kind of Socialism is only Individualism run mad: it might with equal truth be added that extreme Individualism is Socialism run mad.

VIII

One can hardly take leave of Spencer's evolutionary Ethics without saying a word as to his optimistic assumption that human society is on the way towards that state of perfect 'adaptation' in which absolute Ethics will become practicable, and that that state is destined to be actually reached. The assumption appears to rest upon the great cardinal doctrine of the whole *Synthetic Philosophy*—the doctrine that throughout the history of the Universe there has been and must always be a progress 'from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, differentiated, coherent heterogeneity[2].' That such

[1] This was so clear to Spencer himself when he wrote *Social Statics* that he at that time condemned private property in land. He did not recognize that all capital rests upon the same principle, and that most of it has originally grown out of that earliest form of Capitalism.

[2] *First Principles*, p. 396.

a principle really applies not merely to the evolution of inorganic Nature, but to the sphere of Biology and Sociology, could only be proved by an induction based upon the whole of our experience in each province of Science. The attempt to prove such a conclusion in the case of human society is not seriously attempted. How far the assertion that the physical Universe is on the way to a state of absolutely definite, absolutely differentiated, absolutely coherent heterogeneity can be made with any truth or even with any meaning, I leave it to Physicists to say. But, however true or valuable the assertion may be in the physical sphere, that certainly does not prove that it must be true in the case of either the human or the social organism. Nor, if we were to admit the application of this extremely abstract formula to the course of organic and social Evolution, does it seem clear that a 'definite, coherent heterogeneity' would necessarily imply that state of complete adaptation in which pain shall be absent, and in which it will even become possible to perform those absolutely moral actions which involve no pain to any one, but only pleasure.

No animal has yet been evolved which exhibits such a state of perfect adaptation, and, apart from the formula itself, there is no evidence that it ever will do so, or that what is scarcely physiologically conceivable in the case of the human organism will ever be true of a society. If we grant that Evolution shows a tendency in the direction indicated, there is no reason to believe that the tendency will necessarily reach its ideal limit; or that the reverse process, the 'involution' or retrogressive dissolution, which is, according to Spencer, the ultimate destiny of the Universe, may not begin long before that limit is approached. It is impossible to say that the retrogressive tendency may not have already begun. And in the absence of this assurance that Evolution is actually tending to this ideal goal, all reason disappears for assuming that, if we could discern the 'laws' which social changes now exhibit, they would also be the laws under which the human race will attain the best life that is possible to it; such an assumption is unwarranted even on Spencer's hedonistic view of the end. It is still more unwarranted on any higher view.

Another fallacy which runs through Spencer's ethical and political writing is the idea that the course of human history, when it is 'left alone,' will supply us with a guide to human action. He admits that the course of social evolution represents a continuous predominance of purposeful action over unpurposeful. If the 'natural' course of things is to exclude that part of human action which is guided by Reason, we have no data for ascertaining what is the 'natural' course of things in human society, since the evolution of human society has habitually and increasingly been controlled by human Reason, 'interfering' at every turn, in pursuit of its purposes, with the operation of those forces by which Nature is governed in the absence of such interference. If the 'natural' course of things is to include the deliberate action of self-conscious beings in pursuit of the ends, then 'interference' with the course of Nature is a sheer impossibility. We are as much falling in with the 'laws of Evolution' when we interfere as when we abstain from interfering. In neither case can the idea of 'following Nature,' in the modern evolutionary form of that formula, supply us with any guidance in conduct. It must be admitted that Spencer has scarcely, in so many words, committed himself to such a way of expressing his ethical criterion, but the idea indicated by the precept 'thou shalt not interfere with Nature' seems to underlie much of his writing. And his disciples have not always been so circumspect.

The above criticisms are not intended as an adequate appreciation of Herbert Spencer's ethical, social, and political writings. His treatment of social and political problems, however little one may agree with it, is entitled to respectful consideration. Of all his encyclopaedic writings, next to those metaphysical portions in which there is really no Metaphysic, the least valuable element seems to me to be his attempted contribution to ethical theory. His practical teaching, however little it really flows from his evolutionary principles—however much, very often, it is opposed to what might seem logically to flow from such principles—is (if we make allowance for his too individualistic and rather 'bourgeois' point of view) unexceptionable enough; and if it contains much less that is really new and

startling than he himself evidently supposed, he might plead that the best ethical teaching must be largely a reassertion in new forms of what no reflecting person denies. As to the form of it, tastes will differ; but there are no doubt minds to which the accumulation of biological metaphor and physical analogy will prove more impressive than the traditional language of Theology, Philosophy, or common sense. And, if one is irritated by the preaching of platitudes as if they were paradoxes, it should be remembered that Spencer's works, though many of them written and published quite recently, represent ideas which, in the author's youth, though they could never have been as shocking as it pleased him to think, were doubtless less commonplace than they have become now—partly, though only a little, through the influence of his own earlier writings. Unfortunately, while the rest of the world was moving on, Spencer's thought stood still, when it did not go back. With all its faults, the *Synthetic Philosophy* has a considerable place in the history of human thought, if but a small place in the history of Philosophy strictly so called. What is denied in these pages is that it has provided any new basis for Ethics, or that it has advanced beyond the point of view of the old empirical Utilitarianism which Spencer disparaged. What is best in Spencer's excellent sermonettes on the minor Ethics consists in various illustrations and applications of the familiar Utilitarian maxim that we should consider the consequences of one's actions. We are not surprised to find Spencer in the preface to the last instalment of his *Principles of Ethics* confessing: 'The Doctrine of Evolution has not furnished guidance to the extent I had hoped. Most of the conclusions, drawn empirically, are such as right feelings, enlightened by cultivated intelligence, have already sufficed to establish. Beyond certain general sanctions indirectly referred to in verification, there are only here and there, and more especially in the closing chapters, conclusions evolutionary in origin that are additional to, or different from, those which are current[1].' The value of these additions, and the logicality of the process by which they are extracted out of the evolutionary facts, remain then the only points of difference between Herbert

[1] *The Principles of Ethics*, Vol. II. Pref. to pts. v. and vi (1893).

Spencer and his critics. Considered as a new and original system of Ethics, the *Synthetic Philosophy* is a bubble which has been pricked by the hand of its creator.

The publication of Spencer's Autobiography has thrown much light upon the genesis of the *Synthetic Philosophy*. It has shown that the ethical, social, and political ideas commonly associated with the name of Herbert Spencer were not reached in his own mind by any induction or deduction from biological or sociological principles. They were fully formed in their author's mind long before he had become a disciple of Darwin, and were simply the result of the teaching of his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, a distinguished Poor Law Reformer and representative of the old Manchesterian Economics. In so far as they were founded on experience, they were based upon his experience of a Somersetshire village in 1834–6, and not upon any study of the habits either of the Amoeba or the 'peaceful Arafuras.' All the biological and sociological apparatus of the system was simply an afterthought, an attempt to invoke the supposed 'teaching of Science' in support of foregone conclusions.

IX

We started with the admission that an intellectual revolution so great as that which is associated with the name of Charles Darwin might reasonably be expected to have some bearing upon ethical thought. I go on then to ask what this bearing is. Just because it is a far-reaching and penetrating difference of intellectual tone and temper which it has introduced rather than definite theory or dogma, the change is one which may be pointed out in a few words.

(1) The fact that Morality has slowly evolved is no discovery of Darwinism or of any other theory of biological 'Evolution.' The Old and New Testaments, taken by themselves and read even without the light of modern criticism, were enough to show that men's moral ideas had not always been the same, and that there had been a growth in them. Still less excuse was there for any ignoring of this fact by educated men who could compare the ethical ideas of the Bible with those of Homer and Aristotle or with the tales of travellers about the life of savage tribes. Nor

were these differences unobserved. They form the usual stock-in-trade of the Utilitarian critics of *a priori* Morality in all its forms. The Morality of static, invariable, infallible 'innate ideas' is satirized by John Locke with much more insight and humour than is to be found in the corresponding polemics of Spencer. Nor did the constructive Moralists altogether ignore either the differences or the developments of actual Morality. But it must be admitted that they did so very inadequately. Moralists like Butler and Kant might no doubt have pleaded that they were only concerned with Morality in its fullest development; but they made scarcely any attempt to bring their doctrines into connexion with the moral history of the world, or to grapple with the *prima facie* difficulties suggested by the infinite variety of actual moral beliefs. There can be no doubt that the thoroughgoing application of the evolutionary idea to every department of human history has enormously emphasized facts which were known to, but too little regarded by, the Moralists of an earlier generation. And this characteristic category of our age reached its climax in the bridging over by Darwin and Wallace of the gulf which once seemed to divide the lowest of mankind from the highest of the animals. The disappearance of special creation theories, though from a high philosophical point of view it may have left matters very much where they were before, has stamped the idea of development upon the popular imagination, and (by its indirect effects) has transformed the older, or at least the cruder, forms of Intuitionism.

(2) Darwinism has not merely reinforced the evolutionary view of the world's history which was already making progress both in philosophical and in general thought long before Darwin; it has introduced new ideas as to the way in which that development, intellectual, moral, and physical, has taken place. The notion that the character of peoples and of individuals was to some extent affected by physical conditions was not indeed new. That idea found, indeed, its crudest and most startling expression in the pre-Darwinian Buckle[1]. But it is impossible

[1] This crudity was partly due to the attempt to account by immediate environment – especially food and climate – for variations of character and ideas really due to much more slowly acting forces.

to deny that the application of the 'survival of the fittest' doctrine to the growth of moral ideas has emphasized in a very startling way this dependence of character, and therefore of moral ideas, upon historical and partly physical circumstances. Considered simply as a history of the way in which detailed moral beliefs have been moulded by social conditions, Spencer's sociological work undoubtedly has its value, though much of his Anthropology is already obsolete. But this question of origin is not, as has been intimated, the task of Moral Philosophy proper. All that I can attempt is to suggest the importance that the results of such an enquiry have or may have for the Moral Philosopher.

Although, from the metaphysical point of view presupposed in this book, it is impossible to regard moral ideas as the mere products of physical forces, it is undoubtedly true that the moral development attained at any particular time and place is at every turn conditioned by physical facts. Education does not 'produce' our geometrical ideas: they are only producible in a mind already potentially endowed with a capacity for apprehending them. And so with moral ideas. It would be as absurd to talk about the 'struggle for existence' and 'natural selection' as constituting by themselves the 'origin' of our moral ideas as it would be to treat the cane of the schoolmaster as being the 'origin' of our geometrical ideas, though there may be persons in whom these ideas would never have been developed without that instrument. Moral ideas could have developed only in beings endowed with a capacity for Moral Reason: and the truths of which our Moral Reason assures us are not less true because we recognize that certain physical and biological facts and processes have been the condition of their discovery by this or that individual in this or that generation. Certain physical processes are no doubt the conditions under which all mental development takes place in the individual; but for the Idealist all such processes are themselves ultimately spiritual, and the slow development of the psychical concomitants in the individual implies the previous existence of a Mind to which they are already present. Moral ideas are no more 'produced' or 'generated' by physical events than any other of the axioms or categories

of human thought. When this is recognized, there should be no hesitation in admitting that all the biological and psychological and sociological facts insisted upon by the evolutionary Moralists have really been conditions of moral development. They really do help to explain why such a virtue was developed at such a time and place and another virtue in different circumstances, why this aspect of Morality was emphasized in one kind of community, and another in another, and so on. The social or political pressure to which Spencer refers at least the element of 'obligatoriness' attending our moral ideas, has certainly been a condition favouring the development of the moral ideas themselves, just as we recognize that the individual's sense of truth owes much to the discipline of home or school, without being forced to admit that the intellectual approbation and the corresponding emotions which attend the speaking of truth might with equal ease have been transferred by a contrary education to the idea that lying was a virtue, or that, even if that were possible[1], it would prove that Truth is not intrinsically better than lying. The question remains for us 'what significance these questions of origin have for deciding the question of truth or validity?'

On the one hand we have seen that the doctrine of natural selection supplies no absolute guarantee that the moral belief is conducive to the good of the Society, even on the hedonistic view of 'good,' still less on an ideal view. It does not supply an absolute guarantee that the resulting rule of conduct was socially beneficial even at the time. At the most Evolution supplies us, as has already been said, with a slight additional reason (in addition to our general confidence that human Reason never adopts beliefs without some ground) for assuming that a moral rule actually accepted by a race once possessed more or less social justification. When it is inferred that an existing belief still has that justification, the inference is far more precarious. Yet until we can trace the history of the belief, and

[1] To some extent this may have been actually done by particular systems of education, but only at the cost of keeping back the whole moral and intellectual development which would necessarily have resulted in a recognition of the value of truth.

explain to our satisfaction the causes to which the rule owes its real or supposed utility, the evolutionary history of Morality does supply us with an additional caution against tampering with deeply-seated moral convictions. I should myself be disposed to apply this caution to any attempts to tamper with the received morality about Suicide, even when a plausible case may be made out for supposing that some departure from it would be for the true (and not merely the hedonistic) good of Society.

Still, so long as some accepted moral belief is unexplained, the presumption in favour of the rule cannot be a very strong one. It supplies a caution against rash amendment of moral rules: it cannot forbid the amendment of a rule when we have sufficient experience to convince us that the rule introduced by the change will really conduce to our end, and when the end is one about the value of which our moral Reason is clear. But the chief advantage to be derived from the study of ethical history, and of the Darwinian contribution to ethical history, is to be found, as it seems to me, not so much in the presumption of a beneficial tendency in unexplained and unanalysed 'intuitions' as in the assistance which it gives us in explaining the growth of some particular moral belief, and so in determining how far the circumstances to which it owes its beneficial tendency are like or unlike our own. Morality essentially consists in the promotion of a good or ideal of life, the nature of which is discerned by our rational judgements of value. If my Reason tells me that such and such an end of action is good, I have a right to say that my judgements of value cannot be discredited by any account of the process by which I came to have such judgements. But, as we have constantly had occasion to remark, the supreme authority of Reason, and the claim that each of us possesses some share in that Reason, do not involve the claim to personal infallibility. All our knowledge rests ultimately in part upon self-evident truths, in part upon experience. And yet, both in the perceptions upon which experience rests and in the intellectual activities by which sensation becomes perception and perception knowledge, there is at every turn room for the distortion of our judgements by habit, tradition, prejudice, desire, passion. Even in doing a sum of multiplication we may make mistakes, and

these mistakes may be psychologically explained by a desire to get a particular answer (as when a boy bona fide believes that he has done a sum correctly because he has brought out what he already knows to be the right answer); or by some idiosyncracy of false association by which we may be in the habit of confusing (as is related of an eminent Divine) eighteenpence with one and eightpence; or by the lapses of that memory to which we really trust when once the multiplicands become too big for a distinct immediate envisagement of the process by which the result is reached. It is only where an *a priori* truth is very simple and abstract that the general trustworthiness of Reason practically prevents the possibility of thinking that which is false, or (if we choose to say that false thinking is no thinking) from supposing that we are thinking when we are not. No habituation or prejudice or desire could make a member of any nationality or party accept the abstract proposition that a man is guilty of treason because he is a Jew; but it is quite possible that a jury or a court martial may actually come to believe him guilty because they know that he is a Jew. Now we have seen that it is only where moral truths are reducible to a purely formal shape, dealing with an abstract distribution of good, and involving no judgement as to the content of good, that they possess the kind of self-evidence which belongs to the axioms of Mathematics—the self-evidence which makes it impossible for any sane man to deny them except under the influence of a speculative opinion which makes him distrust them just because they do seem self-evident. The judgement 'two men's good is greater than that of one' possesses this degree of self-evidence[1]; but directly we attempt to assign a content to the idea of 'good,' then we enter upon a region in which our *a priori* judgements, as they may still in a sense be called, are in a peculiar degree liable to be influenced by prejudice, desire, emotion, character. In fact, so

[1] I presume that those who say that goods are not commensurable would say that the judgement is 'insignificant' since goods are incommensurable. The judgement may be said to involve the larger judgement 'Whatever is good has quantity, and the axioms of quantity can be applied to it.' The judgement 'Good has quantity,' which no doubt involves a judgement not purely formal, is a judgement about the content of 'Good,' and a judgement which some philosophers actually deny. I should myself

much is this the case that a large class at least of them actually cannot be made at all without the presence of certain emotions. A judgement of value is a self-evident judgement; and, so long as we really judge it, it is reasonable to trust to it and act upon it, for we have nothing else to trust to. But such a judgement may nevertheless be influenced by all the sources of error which we have mentioned, and it is possible sometimes to detect the source of the error. Either we may say that we are liable to mistake our mere inherited or acquired instinct or prejudice or desire for a real judgement of value; or we may say that our apparent 'intuitions' are real judgements of value, but that they are wrong judgements, influenced by the causes of error above mentioned. When reflection convinces us that our judgement was influenced by passion or prejudice, then we alter it, and make another judgement. There is no infallible way of correcting these mistakes. The errors of thinking, in this as in other departments, can only be corrected by harder thinking.

There can be no appeal from the immediate moral judgement to any other standard, but the reconsideration of a moral judgement in the light of fresh facts may always result in its revision. And further knowledge of the circumstances under which we or others made our original judgements, and of the influences which swayed us in making them, is one of the most important of the 'new facts' which may lead to such a reversal. Now a knowledge of the history of moral beliefs may be a most important influence in revising the *prima facie* judgements of our own consciousness and of the society from which we have, with or without moral reflection of our own, absorbed them. And to this history of our moral judgements the facts and laws which have either been taught us, or have had their significance greatly enhanced, by Darwinism have undoubtedly contributed an element, though an element which has (as we have seen) disappointed even the protagonist of evolutionary Morality. Every child performs this process of ethical revision on a small scale when he learns gradually to distinguish the rules of his father's household or the idiosyncracies of his parent's ideal from the code

be disposed to trace their mistake to prejudices of psychological origin, usually some 'idol of the theatre.'

accepted by the world outside. The discovery of the difference throws him back on his own moral judgement, and compels him either to side with his father against the world or with the world against his father. He may have been led to put smoking on a level with drinking, and moderate drinking with excessive drinking. When he discovers that the world in general thinks otherwise, he may be compelled to find a reasonable ground for continued belief in the parental tenets; or, if he do not do so, he will be driven to abandon them. In the same way, on a more extended scale, I have no doubt that to many Scotsmen a generation ago the sinfulness of whistling on the Sabbath presented itself as a strictly self-evident judgement—self-evident at least upon the assumption of certain facts for which it was believed that there was a sufficient evidence in history. A further knowledge of the process by which the Scotch Sunday was evolved, of the way in which Sunday has been regarded at other times and in other places, may gradually enable such a man to disentangle the belief in the continued obligation of the Jewish Sabbath from some idea as to the duty of worship or the value of rest which may still commend itself to him as a self-evident judgement of value. There is no appeal from a moral intuition, but in the light of facts like these what seemed an intuition is seen not to be so; or (what is really the same thing) the intuition which the individual's moral consciousness once possessed has disappeared altogether.

In the foregoing instances the facts of moral history which lead to the reversal of apparently intuitive judgements are facts upon which the Darwinian doctrines have no bearing. But there are some on which they may have a bearing. It is not very easy to find good illustrations, for the most obvious cases in which ideas may have owed more or less of their apparent authority to natural selection, but have partially outlived their social justification, are ideas which were discarded long before the appearance of the Darwinian theories. Anthropology has certainly led us to see that the high estimate in which courage is held by modern men is a direct inheritance from a time in which courage was the one paramount condition of tribal survival and of social usefulness in individuals. Courage of the military sort is certainly less

useful to modern societies. In a distant future it might even cease to be socially useful at all. In that case, upon hedonistic grounds, one would be compelled to say that it is a quality which might be dispensed with. From a non-hedonistic point of view, no account of the process by which the human race became possessed of its admiration for courage could prevent us from saying that we still regard the capacity for facing pain or danger as an essential quality of ideal manhood. But the discovery of its evolutionary history may reasonably lead us to treat this virtue as (in its ordinary forms) a very elementary one, to recognize that the grounds on which we admire courage should compel us to condemn various other kinds of moral turpitude as men now condemn cowardice, and to insist that our conception of the courage which may still claim to be in a sense the fundamental virtue must be expanded and elevated till it includes at least that willingness to face adverse opinion in the cause of Right which has received the name of moral courage, even if it does not include all kinds of defiance and endurance of pain or evil in the cause of Right.

The evolutionary explanation of Courage may prompt us to modify but not actually to reverse an accepted belief. Are there any cases in which the evolutionary origin of our moral judgements may compel an actual reversal? It is possible that cases in which the evolutionary explanation may at least inspire doubt and suggest reconsideration may be found in that class of moral intuitions which some Evolutionists explain by their influence upon the growth of population. The smaller importance attached by modern communities to such increase has already led to the abandonment of the rule which in many communities actually condemned celibacy. And among our actual moral intuitions there is probably none in which the influence of natural selection may be more plausibly traced than in the instinctive repugnance to the marriage of near blood-relations. It is a peculiarly good instance because it can hardly be supposed that the moral disapproval was originally or exclusively due to a reflective observation of its physiological consequences. And, though the condemnation may be owing primarily to a horror of contact with the tabooed blood of the

maternal clan—a horror closely connected with totemistic ideas[1] —it is possible that the influence of natural selection may have strengthened the tendency by the elimination of families or tribes which did not share the beliefs which prohibited the marriage of near kin[2]. This is a case where the evolutionary explanation, if valid, does not destroy but rather reinforces the code of Ethics which direct experience would establish; for the same considerations of physiological utility which explain the rule justify its maintenance. But, though this evolutionary explanation cannot compel any abandonment of the rule against intermarriage of close kin, the discovery of its true ground may compel its rationalization. Among primitive peoples, if it was natural selection which established the barrier against the marriage of near kin, natural selection certainly overshot the mark and extended the prohibition much further than was necessary to maintain the vigour of the race. It can hardly be pretended that the elaborate and arbitrary table of prohibited degrees established in many tribes can ever have had any social justification at all, except as being indirectly connected with customs which had a social justification—a useful reminder of the truth, so often forgotten by Evolutionists, that the survival of a modification does not *prove* its social utility even in the purely biological sphere. And if the prohibition of the marriage of kin was only secured in ancient times by codes which carried with it the prohibition of many harmless unions and sanctioned some harmful ones, it is conceivable that the feeling against the marriage of the deceased wife's sister, to which the physiological objection does not apply, may really be an instance of a moral prejudice not based on any real social convenience or genuinely moral consideration. A case in which it is still more conceivable that the recognition of origin may tend to modify our

[1] M. Durkheim (*Le Prohibition de l'Inceste* in *L'Année Sociologique*, 1898) has attempted to show that the horror of incest was originally connected with the custom of exogamy, which in turn arose from the horror of contact with blood, especially menstrual blood, and particularly the blood of the maternal clan, i. e. the blood of the totem-god incarnate in each member of it.

[2] The physiological ill effects of such marriages have, however, been much disputed.

judgement as to validity is supplied by a great ethical question on which I have already touched. It is probable that the once strong disposition to condemn the restriction of families may be traced either to a more or less consciously accepted theory that everything which checked population made against tribal efficiency, or perhaps simply to a natural disposition to accept the usual or 'natural' as the moral[1]. The probability of such an origin may naturally weaken the authority of such a feeling for those who think that an unlimited increase of population is not to be desired. But the most that such theories of origin can do, even when they are well founded, is to clear away prejudice, and leave the question to be decided on its own merits—that is to say, mainly upon the answer we give to the question how far a continuous increase of population is desirable and conducive to the greatest quantity of the best and highest life. It is quite conceivable that this may still be the case, though for different reasons from those which made it conducive to survival in a primitive tribe[2].

The instances just adduced may, however, suggest an important caution, which sets a very rigid limit to the expectation of any very extensive practical guidance in Ethics from the study of moral evolution. It is of paramount importance to remark that the cause which has originally dictated a moral rule may be very different from the causes which explain, and which justify, its continued enforcement. Obliviousness of this fact enormously impairs the value of Herbert Spencer's speculations on the early history of Religion, and it is sometimes forgotten in his ethical speculation also. It is possible (I express no opinion) that the

[1] This very powerful factor in the production of actual ethical codes has been much emphasized by Simmel. A curious instance of its operation in the sphere of elementary economic Justice is the fact that in primitive societies it was not always recognized that everything could be exchanged for everything. If you want slaves, you must buy them with guns; if you want ivory, you must buy it with guns and powder; no quantity of tobacco will buy the smallest piece of ivory, though it will buy many other things. See an article in the *Economic Review* (Vol. XII, Ap., 1902) on 'The Relation of Economics to Ethnology,' by Mr. W. W. Carlile.

[2] See the important articles of Mr. Sidney Webb in *The Times* of Oct. 9 and Oct. 16, 1906.

worship of the Sun may, at least in this or that particular instance, have originated in the childish mistake which took an ancestor called 'Sun' for the heavenly body itself. But it is obvious, to minds not preoccupied with the desire to trace religious ideas to some one single principle, that this belief could hardly have imposed itself even upon the savage mind, still less have survived among civilized races, unless it has satisfied deeper intellectual or emotional needs than were satisfied by ancestor worship. If a mistaken etymology may in this or that tribe have led to the development of a deified ancestor into a Sun-god, it was because the tribe had reached a stage of intellectual and religious development in which a Sun-god seemed a more proper object of worship than an ancestor. In the same way, proof that some moral belief originated in a mistake, an accident, in what we should regard as an immoral tendency, or in natural selection depending on considerations of social utility no longer applicable, is in no way inconsistent with the belief that it has perpetuated itself, and commends itself to us, on account of its true or objective validity. Thus it is held by Professor Westermarck that clothes originated neither in an innate sense of decency nor in the desire for warmth, but in the love of ornament and particularly of immodest ornament[1]. It was the habit of wearing clothes which produced the sense of decency, not the sense of decency which led to the use of clothes. Modesty is thereby proved to have originated in indecency. But the fact, if accepted, would by no means prove that, had men never worn clothes, they would have attained to as high a standard of thought and feeling about sexual matters as they have actually done—still less that the tone of feeling about such matters would now be improved by the abandonment or relaxation of the existing practice. Nor does the fact that the primitive horror of bloodshed was partly due to ideas connected with Totemism and Taboo[2] show that an enlightened people should abandon its prejudices against murder and manslaughter. The feeling against impurity before marriage may conceivably have originated mainly in the social utility of an

[1] *History of Human Marriage*, Ed. iii, p. 191 sq.
[2] L. R. Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion*, p. 125 sq.

increased population and the due maintenance of offspring; or (according to another school) it may have been connected in its origin (like the feeling against Incest) with ideas about Totemism and Taboo, Exogamy and the maternal clan, which have long since been abandoned; or again, it may have resulted simply from a transference, by association or mistaken analogy, to all extra-matrimonial intercourse of feelings originally directed against such intercourse within the limits of family or clan. But such facts of moral history (if facts they be) cannot compel us to conclude that the prohibition of such impurity should be relaxed, on the ground that universal marriage is not now socially necessary, or that general immorality is possible without the appearance of illegitimate children, or that the reasons which originally dictated the prohibition are now known to be baseless superstitions. Our approval of a moral judgement *may* be altered by the discovery of its history; but, where it persists, we are no more bound to distrust it than we are called upon to give up some mathematical principle which may have originally been discovered and valued for astrological purposes. It cannot be too emphatically stated that the present value of modes of conduct or modes of feeling, of emotions or likings or dislikings, does not depend upon their origin.

The evolutionary history of Ethics may then supply us with some help—chiefly negative help—towards (as it were) purging our value-judgements of irrelevant matter due to mere inheritance or tradition or prejudice and the like. Unfortunately it can supply us with no absolute specific for distinguishing our own real judgements of value from those apparent judgements which are really explainable by merely psychological causes—still less for ensuring the absolute or objective validity of the judgements.

There is a third way in which the Darwinian doctrine of Evolution touches the province of Ethics—through the simple physiological doctrine that race-maintenance requires the elimination of the unfit and still more the prevention of that 'inverted selection' which promotes the survival of the unfit. Of course, when we bring this doctrine into connexion with human and civilized society, we must extend the idea of 'fitness' and

'unfitness' beyond that mere adaptation to conditions which produces physical survival in animals. It must be so extended as to include fitness for the kind of life which we judge to be ethically desirable. We have seen reasons for rejecting the crude and coarse application of the doctrine advocated by those who would revive among us the infanticide which the higher moral sentiment even of the Greeks condemned. Such artificial imitation of natural selection could at most secure physical fitness, and as even physical fitness in human beings depends quite as much upon education as upon birth, even this could not be effectual unless the ethics of our neo-Paganism (unlike the older Paganism) allowed a periodic elimination to extend much beyond the period of infancy. It is not necessary for the present purpose to determine the difficult question how far moral and intellectual qualities are inherited, and how far the undoubted transmission to their offspring of the qualities which have made parents social failures is due mainly to their incapacity for educating their children. The success of such work as that of Dr. Barnardo certainly seems to suggest that comparatively little is due to inheritance and very much to environment. But, however this may be, there can be no doubt that legislatures and social reformers ought to endeavour to secure that the physically, intellectually, or morally incapable (up to a certain point of course the three kinds of incapacity are apt to coincide) shall have less chance of leaving offspring than the more capable, or that at all events they shall not have more chance of doing so. This last possibility is well within the reach of injudicious charity, private or public. We have approached to such a state of things in some places quite nearly enough to illustrate the enormity of the social peril. How to deal with it is one of the great practical problems of our age, but the discussion belongs rather to social and political than to purely ethical Philosophy. And there is the less need to insist upon it inasmuch as the subject has been admirably dealt with by Professor Bosanquet[1]. This danger may no doubt be used as

[1] See his Essay on *Socialism and Natural Selection* in *Aspects of the Social Problem*. It will be seen from the text that I do not regard the considerations very properly dwelt upon by Professor Bosanquet as a final refutation of Socialism.

a warning against the wilder forms of Socialism, and still more against some of the wilder socialistic experiments in a non-socialistic society. But it must be remembered that the competitive régime—in the form which it assumes in a modern industrial society—secures such selection to a very inadequate extent. Failure in the economic struggle has to be so very complete before it prevents marriage and the production of children. It is those who have the lowest standard of comfort who marry earliest. Any social reorganization which tends to raise the standard of comfort tends, as far as it goes, to decrease rather than to promote the production of unfit children. In this way Darwinism has certainly emphasized a social law of vast importance, which it was quite within the reach of the most empirical observation to discover. But this is merely an instance of the application of a new scientific discovery to a particular ethical question. Such a contribution to ethical doctrine is merely the kind of contribution which every scientific discovery may incidentally make. Every new discovery, even of some quite isolated scientific fact—every improvement in drainage, every new drug, every new economic law must obviously modify the details of individual or social duty, and involve the abandonment of practices or rules of action in which our forefathers believed. There is no question here of any new ethical principle or of any general improvement of ethical methods unknown to pre-Darwinian thinkers.

We have seen then that the doctrine of Evolution in its Darwinian form has strengthened and emphasized the already sufficient evidence of moral evolution, and warned us against the cruder forms of Intuitionism; that it has supplied us with an additional ground for a *prima facie* confidence in apparently intuitive moral beliefs, while at the same time it has enforced the necessity of asking whether such beliefs have or have not outlived their justification. In so far as it has thrown light upon the causes which have determined the growth of particular moral beliefs at particular times and places, it has helped to facilitate the process of discriminating between mere inherited instincts and deliberate deliverances of our present moral consciousness. Finally, the doctrine of survival through natural

selection has an important social application. Most of this teaching springs rather from facts of moral history and laws of social development which were quite well known before Darwin. Here as elsewhere the distinctly Darwinian element in the general doctrine of Evolution has played directly but a small part in producing that general tendency of modern thought which finds the explanation of things in a history of origins. Yet the impetus which the epoch-making discovery of the 'origin of species' has given to that tendency cannot be considered a small thing. That the doctrines of the evolutionary Moralists also illustrate the erroneous modern tendency to think that the *mere* study of the historical development of anything—of an institution, of a Religion, of the human mind—is by itself a sufficient explanation of it and a sufficient basis for the understanding of it, I have also attempted to show in the course of this chapter[1].

[1] The popularity of Spencer's writings has made it desirable to examine the claims of Evolutionary Ethics in the form which he has given to them. Otherwise a study of Sir Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics* (1882) or Professor Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress* (1889) might have been better worth making. There is much in Sir Leslie Stephen's ethical writing the value of which is quite independent of Evolution; but in so far as there is anything 'evolutionary' in his views, he differs from Spencer chiefly (1) by omitting much that is open to criticism in Spencer, and substantially reducing the evolutionary element to the doctrine that traditional or inherited rules or tendencies of conduct may be presumed to have originated (through natural selection or otherwise) in considerations of social Well-being; (2) substituting the very vague idea of 'social health' for pleasure as the ethical end. Professor Alexander, whose book also contains much excellent writing which has no particular connexion with evolutionary theories, has attempted to apply the idea of struggle for existence, not to societies or individuals, but to the strife between conflicting ideals. He assumes that the ideal which has *de facto* survived is shown *ipso facto* to be fittest for this or that particular society at this or that particular time. Substantially, Professor Alexander's thesis is simply a revival of Hume's doctrine that Morality is nothing but dominant public opinion in combination with the assumption (on evolutionary grounds) that public opinion is always right—an assumption which has been incidentally criticized in the course of this chapter. Later writers who exhibit the same tendencies seem to have abandoned the attempt to find a new basis for Ethics in the fact or theory of Evolution, and may be simply described as 'naturalistic' rather than in any distinctive sense 'evolutionary' Moralists. Had the first volume

of Professor Westermarck's *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* come into my hands earlier, I might more frequently have referred to it. But after all, though it is impossible to exaggerate its interest and importance as an historical or anthropological work, it contains nothing particularly new in the department of ethical theory. His view of Ethics is substantially the Moral Sense view of Ethics, and there is nothing in the introductory chapter devoted to ethical theory which demands any addition to, or modification of, the treatment which I have given to the subject in my chapter on Reason and Feeling in Book I. In spite of his great learning in all that relates to Moral Philosophy (it may be doubted whether he has the same acquaintance with Metaphysic), Professor Westermarck does not seem to appreciate the existence of any form of rationalistic Ethics except the crude Intuitionism which supposes that a consciousness without feeling or emotion, without experience of life or experience of consequences, could lay down *a priori* detailed rules of conduct which would be actually coincident with the generally acknowledged Morality. In spite of having reduced Morality to subjective feeling, Professor Westermarck from one end of the book to the other constantly assumes that some one mode of moral feeling is intrinsically truer and higher than another. His position is, in short, that of Hume without Hume's clear consciousness of the speculative and practical consequences of such a theory.

CHAPTER V

CASUISTRY, ITS POSSIBILITY AND LIMITATIONS

I

This work began without any formal enquiry into the scope or character of the Science with which it deals. And by this time the author's view of it has, it is hoped, become sufficiently plain to make a formal discussion of the matter unnecessary. There remain, however, some controverted questions about the sphere and scope of Moral Philosophy which it seems desirable to clear up. The most important of these is the question, 'What, if any, is the practical use of Moral Philosophy?'

Primarily, no doubt, Moral Philosophy must be looked upon as a branch of speculative Philosophy, and therefore as not intended to have any practical use. The justification for its study is so far just the same as the justification for the study of Metaphysics or the higher Mathematics. If either actual knowledge or the exercise of the intellectual faculties in the effort to know is of any intrinsic value, no knowledge can have a higher value than that knowledge of things in general—of the Universe as a whole—which is the aim of Philosophy in contradistinction to that of the special or departmental Sciences. And Moral Philosophy, though concerned with a particular aspect of Reality, deals with an aspect of it so fundamental and comprehensive, that many of its problems cannot be sharply distinguished from the problem of Reality in general; and it therefore takes its place by the side of Logic, Aesthetic, and Metaphysic as one of the branches of Philosophy rather than among the special Sciences[1]. But though there would be ample justification for

[1] Logic, Aesthetic, and Ethic are sometimes spoken of as normative Sciences, i. e. Sciences which set up standards, or which deal not simply with what is, but with what ought to be. They determine the principles upon which we distinguish between true and false, right and wrong judgements about the true, the beautiful, and the good. As I have no particular

the study of Moral Philosophy even though it were in the ordinary sense of the word useless, it does not follow that it does, as a matter of fact, serve no purpose beyond that of satisfying the desire to know, and supplying scope for the mental activities involved in the effort to satisfy that desire. We do not study Astronomy merely as an aid to Navigation, but it is a fact that Astronomy does aid Navigation. A Science is not degraded when it is shown to be useful; and in considering the particular persons who are to study a particular Science, and to what point they are to study it, the question of its utility is of fundamental importance. No Science contributes more to a scientific conception of Nature as a whole than Astronomy: but (in so far as it can be distinguished from general Physics) it has comparatively few students, because its practical applications are smaller than those of Chemistry or Physiology; and the only considerable class of persons who actually study more than its elements are those who learn it not for the general improvement of their minds, but as the theoretical basis of the art of Navigation. It is possible then that besides its importance in the construction of an ultimate theory of the Universe, Moral Philosophy may have, like some special Sciences, a practical value of its own which may constitute a reason for its study. Nor, even when looked on from the purely speculative point of view as a branch of Philosophy, is it necessarily useless. It must not be assumed that the importance of speculation itself is purely speculative. Although Metaphysic is in a sense of all Sciences the most useless, it is in another sense the most useful on account of its intimate connexion with questions of vital importance to the spiritual interests of Humanity.

It may be doubted whether the tendency to emphasize the supposed uselessness of Metaphysic, which is now somewhat in fashion, is really conducive to the interests of the Science simply as a Science [1]. While no doubt the desire for immediate edifica-

affection for the term, I do not care to discuss the objections which have been urged against its use.

[1] There are no doubt now traces of an extreme reaction against this tendency. The present writer has no sympathy with the 'Pragmatism' which not merely denies the value of Truth but seeks to break down the distinction between the true and the useful or the good.

tion—the desire to get a sanction for rules of life regarded as of practical importance or to bolster up some political or ecclesiastical system—has often interfered with the thoroughness and honesty of philosophical enquiry (even in systems ostensibly of the most purely speculative character), it still remains true that the greatest steps of philosophical progress have been taken by the men in whom the desire to find guidance for life has been at least as prominent as the desire to satisfy a purely intellectual curiosity. No one is really without practical interests; no one is really beyond reach of the temptation to allow his theoretical judgement to be swayed by his social aspirations, his inherited religious convictions, his personal likings and dislikings. And the interests of Truth are best served by a candid admission of the fact. The men who have pursued Philosophy in most ostensible detachment from all practical aims have possibly not been the least swayed by the passions which militate against the attainment of Truth. To be without ethical feeling is to be anti-ethical; to be without social feeling is really to be anti-social; to be without the desire to justify, or at least to discover, a religious creed is almost invariably to adopt an attitude of hostility to all religious creeds. The desire to find a sure basis for aspiration and conduct is not in the least incompatible with the desire that that basis should be a sound one. To be indifferent to the results of enquiry is not really a love of Truth. A strong sense of the practical importance of Truth for purposes of life is possibly less injurious to calmness and clearness of judgement than the love of paradox, the childish desire to shock, or the mere parade of intellectual force. There need be no collision between the love of Truth and the love of Good: if good be really good, to be without the love of it cannot be a necessary condition of intellectual sanity. Nor is a predisposition to find some measure of Truth in the beliefs of the past a disqualification for their impartial examination. No man is really without desires: the idea of making the mind a *tabula rasa*, in the sense of getting rid of all practical interest in the consequences of our thinking, is an *ignis fatuus* as foolish as the mystic's attempt to rid himself of desire—an aspiration which is itself a desire. Desire cannot be extin-

guished: one desire can only be balanced, controlled, or in time supplanted, by other desires. The true security for intellectual open-mindedness is not the extinction of other desires, but the presence in due proportion of the love of Truth, based upon the conviction both of its essential value for its own sake, and of a faith (for which no *complete* speculative justification can be given) that in the long run it must be best even for the most severely practical of human interests to know the truth, and that so at the last Wisdom will be justified of her children. This is a faith which might no doubt conceivably have to be given up if growing knowledge failed to justify it: it is enough to say here that in the present writer's view it represents a presumption which the whole of our experience up to this point in the world's history tends to confirm.

If then there is nothing unbefitting the dignity, or injurious to the interests, of even the most speculative Philosophy in the admission that we pursue it partly on account of its value for life, still less is there anything injurious in such an admission in the case of Moral Philosophy. It would be natural to suppose that, besides its value as a branch of the speculative Science of Reality, Moral Philosophy should have a peculiar value of its own, inasmuch as the element which it contributes to the total theory of Reality is that which has the most direct bearing upon the conduct of life, whatever be the nature of that bearing. Even when regarded on its more speculative side, Moral Philosophy may reasonably claim a special practical importance on account of the element which it contributes to Theology and so to Religion, or to that ultimate theory of and attitude towards the Universe at large which takes the place of Theology and Religion from the point of view of those who do not accept the beliefs usually covered by those terms. In this sense its practical value will hardly be questioned even by those who most delight in exhibiting its unpractical character[1]. But Moral

[1] If it should turn out, as the result of enquiry, that a theory of things in general is not an assistance in the conduct of life, this would itself be a conclusion of direct practical value. To get rid of illusions (for those who on whatever ground believe that it is best to know the truth) must by itself throw some light upon the path of life.

Philosophy is not merely the Science of conduct in general but of conduct in particular. If the view taken of it in these pages be well founded, its special problem (to which all others are, from the point of view of pure Ethics, subordinate) is to determine what it is right to do[1]. And such an enquiry might reasonably be expected to throw some light upon the practical questions of life.

It would be almost a contradiction in terms to assert that a scientific enquiry into the question what it is right to do has no bearing whatever upon the question what it is right to do. Upon a purely sceptical theory which would deny the possibility of a scientific answer to the problems which the Science cannot but ask, such a result might no doubt be barely thinkable, though (as in the case of still more ultimate problems) even sceptical or negative conclusions may have a very important bearing upon life. Moral Philosophy would have some bearing upon life even if its only verdict should be 'So far as Science is concerned, you may do just whatever you like,' or 'The best way to do right is not to think at all about what it is right to do.' Such a view as to the actual content of our Science is not the one which has been taken in these pages; and from the point of view of a constructive Moral Philosophy Ethical Science might be clearly expected to have a more positive bearing upon detailed problems of duty. The nature and amount of such practical utility we have, however, yet to examine. It may well turn out that the amount of guidance to be practically obtained from the scientific study of Morality may be much smaller than our view of its theoretical scope might naturally lead us to expect. If the view of Ethics which we take is a true one, Casuistry is undoubtedly the goal of Ethics, but it must not be assumed that the goal is one which has yet been, or even which is ever destined to be, fully attained[2].

[1] On the view we have taken that enquiry merges in the enquiry 'what is the good?' but it is desirable to state the aim of a Science in terms of its problem rather than of a conclusion which would not be universally admitted.

[2] 'So far as Ethics allows itself to give lists of virtues or even to name constituents of the Ideal, it is indistinguishable from Casuistry. . . . Casuistry is the goal of ethical investigation. It cannot be safely attempted at the

If it is the goal of Ethics scientifically to discover what ought to be done, it is not so much the practical utility of the Science as its limitations which will require to be insisted upon. *Prima facie*, we might expect Moral Philosophy to possess a practical importance which, by almost universal admission, it does not actually possess. *A priori* it might be supposed that the Science of Life ought to be as important to right living as the Science of Hygienics is to the production of physical health, and that the whole lives of those who do not possess the Science themselves ought to be at least as completely regulated by those who do, as it would be ideally desirable that the physical side of life should be controlled by expert medical advice. By almost universal admission this is far from being the case. And that being so, my task will practically consist as much in explaining why the Science of Morals does not possess this immense utility as in asking what usefulness remains to it when chimerical aspirations have been laid aside.

In so far as it succeeds in its aims, the bearing of Moral Philosophy upon life is obvious; the usefulness of a Science which should really enable us to pronounce with accuracy and certainty what each one of us ought to do at every particular moment of his life needs no demonstration. It is more necessary, and more difficult, to explain why it is not likely—perhaps ever, certainly not for an indefinite period in the future—to achieve even an approximate realization of those aims. And the first limitation to the probabilities of its practical usefulness is constituted by the fact that its ultimate data are simply those deliverances of the moral consciousness which the Moral Philosopher shares with the rest of mankind. Its business is to analyse the way in which we actually judge about conduct, just as the business of Logic is to analyse the way in which we actually think. As the Logician does not necessarily think more logically than other men, so the Moral Philosopher does not necessarily judge about conduct better than other men. A trained Logician may be a very poor reasoner, and a very good reasoner may know nothing of logical Science. So a competent

beginning of our studies, but only at the end.' Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 4, 5.

Moral Philosopher may be a bad adviser in matters of conduct, while the best and practically wisest of men may be quite innocent of an ethical system. This comparison of Moral Philosophy to Logic has been made by Mr. Bradley, one of whose most violent explosions is directed against the whole idea of Casuistry, whether of the old priestly and authoritative or of the modern Utilitarian sort. It is worth while therefore to ask firstly, whether, in so far as the scope of Moral Philosophy can be compared to that of Logic, the acceptance of the parallel necessarily forbids us to look for any practical Utility in the Science, and secondly whether the parallel is a complete one.

As this chapter is largely an examination of the view taken by Mr. Bradley, I give the whole passage:—

'There is another false science more unlovely in life and more unpleasant in decay, from which I myself should be loath to divide it. Just as Logic has been perverted into the art of reasoning, so Ethics has been perverted into the art of morality. They are twin delusions we shall consign, if we are wise, to a common grave.

'But I would not grudge Casuistry a Christian burial. I should be glad to see it dead and done with on any terms; and then, if all the truth must be spoken, in its later years it has suffered much wrong. That it became odious beyond parallel and in parts most filthy, is not to be denied; but it ill becomes the parents of a monster, who have begotten it and nourished it, to cry out when it follows the laws of its nature. And, if I am to say what I think, I must express my conviction that it is not only the Catholic priest, but it also is our utilitarian moralist, who embraces the delusion which has borne such a progeny. If you believe, as our Utilitarian believes, that the philosopher should know the reason why each action is to be judged moral or immoral; if you believe that he at least should guide his action reflectively by an ethical code, which provides an universal rule and canon for every possible case, and should enlighten his more uninitiated fellows, then it seems to me you have wedded the mistake from which this offensive offspring has issued. It may be true that the office of professional confessor has made necessary a completer codification of offences, and has joined doctrinal vagaries to ethical blunders. We may allow that it was the lust for spiritual tyranny which choked the last whisper of the unsanctified conscience. It may be true that, in his effort theoretically to exhaust the possibilities of human

depravity, the celibate priest dwelt with curious refinement on the morbid subject of sexual transgression. But unless his principle is wholly unsound I confess that I can hardly find fault with his practice; for if there is to be an art and a code of morality, I do not see how we can narrow its scope beforehand. The field is not limited by our dislikes, and whoever works at the disgusting parts, is surely deserving not of blame but of gratitude. Hence if the Utilitarian has declined to follow the priest, he has also declined to follow his own principles; he has stopped short not from logical reasons but from psychological causes[1].'

But in the first place I should submit that Logic is not wholly useless. Mr. Bradley has no doubt done good service by insisting upon the impossibility of reducing all valid reasoning to the syllogistic form. He is perhaps right even in holding that it is for ever impossible to construct any completely adequate Grammar (as it were) of correct reasoning—any complete enumeration of the types of inference to one or other of which all valid arguments can be reduced. It is quite true that primarily Logic is a speculative Science, that there is no art of correct reasoning, and that the idea that the business of Logic is to teach people how to argue a good or even a bad case has led to grave misunderstandings as to the nature and content of the Science. But all the same it may quite reasonably be urged that Logic does in some measure help people to think correctly. Logic is thinking about Thought: and though people may in practice think very well about other things without having thought abstractly about thinking itself, and may think very badly about other things when they have spent their lives in thinking about Thought, it is nevertheless true to say that *ceteris paribus* a man is the more likely to think well about other things when he has bestowed some study upon the conditions of valid inference, the ultimate grounds of our ordinary and our scientific beliefs, and so on. Teachers of Physical Science are often desirous that their pupils should go through the discipline of elementary Logic, and find that even a very elementary course of Logic[2] is of some practical value to

[1] *Principles of Logic*, pp. 247-8.

[2] Mr. Bradley would probably insist that much of what is ordinarily

students of Physical Science. To have their attention called to the ultimate grounds of all belief, to the most usual types of conception, judgement, and inference, to the most ordinary forms of incorrect reasoning and the most common sources of error, has a tendency to help the student in following actual concrete reasoning, to guard him against error in such reasoning, and still more perhaps to aid him in distinguishing between the various degrees of certainty, probability, and possibility with which scientific propositions may be affirmed. No doubt it remains true that the detailed methods of enquiry and reasoning employed in each Science are part of the business of that Science. Logic must follow, and cannot anticipate, the methods of Science. Each man judges best about the matters with which he is familiar, and the fact that to minds properly trained in a particular Science arguments may often appeal which strike persons unfamiliar with them as precarious enough is not necessarily a final condemnation of such arguments. Criticism of the methods of a Science from the outside has no doubt a very restricted value, at least so long as the man of Science really confines himself to the proper scope of his particular Science. But this the scientific man is not always willing to do. He may not always estimate correctly the degree of probability attained even by his own Science within its proper limits. Still more often he may inadequately appreciate the abstract character of its results, and the limitations within which alone they are really applicable. When there is a question of collision between the apparent conclusions of different Sciences, or of the co-ordination of their results, then logical training, and indeed philosophical training in general, may not be without a very direct bearing even upon matters which are usually considered to belong exclusively to the Physical Sciences pure and simple. That some consideration of

taught under the title of elementary Logic is really very bad Logic or not Logic at all. Such an admission would only strengthen my case. If the Logic commonly expected in elementary Examinations were in closer touch with the actual procedure of the scientific intellect, the results might be better, though after all it is probably familiarity with the difficulties and problems of Logic, rather than with any particular solution of them, that makes Logic a good propaedeutic for Science.

the nature of proof in general might be a useful propaedeutic for the votaries of many other branches of knowledge besides Physical Science is a conclusion suggested by the perusal of critical and historical arguments both of the ultra-conservative and of the ultra-speculative schools. I should not hesitate to say that *ceteris paribus* a man who had studied Logic would be likely to make a better theological or historical critic than one who had not. Value of this restricted and pedagogic kind might well be claimed for Moral Philosophy, even if we accepted the parallel of Logic as expressing the whole truth about the matter. But, when all is said, it must be admitted that the value of Logic as an aid to correct reasoning is comparatively slight and indirect: the main problem is how far the parallel between Logic and Moral Philosophy is an exact one.

The reason why the utility of Logic for the Sciences is of this very restricted character is that Logic can do nothing but make abstract generalizations about the actual methods employed in thinking about something else. It has, therefore, no object-matter except what is common to it and all the Sciences. It studies from a particular point of view the very thinking by which the other Sciences are made. Moral Philosophy, on the other hand, has a special object-matter which is not the object-matter of the other Sciences. Its business is not with Thought abstracted from its contents, but with a particular object of Thought—that is to say, human conduct. It is true that the Science of Ethics has no instrument but the moral Reason and the ordinary intellectual faculties which are common to the scientific Moralist and the ordinary individual. But that fact is, as far as it goes, a reason for retaining, and not for surrendering, the expectation that the Science might prove practically useful. It is equally true with regard to the other Sciences that their professors only employ the same methods of thinking which other men employ, and employ them upon matter which falls also to some extent within the experience of ordinary men. Each Science is the attempt to study some particular department or aspect of human experience, but to study it more thoroughly and systematically than ordinary men study it. Every Science starts with the experience of common life and with the methods

of common life, though it ultimately reaches conclusions which go beyond common knowledge. And that is exactly the position of Moral Science. It aims at thinking about those matters of conduct about which all men think to some extent, but at thinking more thoroughly, consistently, and systematically than most ordinary men habitually do think. It might be expected that the result of such scientific thought would supply a better, truer, more valid guide to conduct than the ordinary, confused, and often self-contradictory thinking of ordinary persons in ordinary life. It is true that Moral Philosophy deals with these problems in general, and in a highly abstract way; but, after all, that is the case with all Sciences, and yet that does not prevent their having various practical applications. It may be that the exceptionally general and abstract character of Moral Science as compared with the exceptional concreteness, particularity, and complexity of practical problems will set some limits to this usefulness. But though the Science is abstract, it is not so abstract as Logic. Logic, as we have seen, is a thinking about Thought in abstraction (in so far as such an abstraction can be made) from any special object of thought. Moral Philosophy is a thinking about an object-matter which, though a wide and general one, is something distinguishable from the object of Thought in general.

To this line of argument Mr. Bradley has a reply. Ethical thinking is not 'discursive.' It is a delusion to suppose that we can 'know the reason why each action is to be judged moral or immoral,' or that to 'guide his action reflectively by an ethical code' is even an ideal to be aimed at. Such declarations may mean a good many different things. But, if we are to follow out the line of thought suggested by the furious diatribe against Casuistry quoted above and by the whole tenor of his *Ethical Studies*, we must suppose Mr. Bradley to mean that there is actually no such thing as arguing or reasoning about conduct. Consistency is not a demand of the ethical consciousness, or of the ordinary Reason and Understanding when applied to this particular subject-matter. Ethical judgements are simply isolated, incoherent, particular, *ad hoc* pronouncements of an inward oracle. No attempt to systematize or rationalize them, in the

way in which we attempt to systematize and rationalize other elements of crude, immediate experience, is likely to make the resulting judgements more valid. We can never argue that, if a certain action is right in one particular case, another course of conduct cannot also be right in another case which resembles the former in all relevant particulars. I cannot argue that, if it is wrong to murder white men, it must be wrong to murder black men, unless I can point to some difference between white men and black men which the moral consciousness can recognize as a ground for this differential treatment. We cannot call upon a man who sends people to prison for stealing and yet steals himself to admit that one part or other of his conduct must lack ethical justification. On the contrary, to think about conduct, it would seem to be suggested, is already the first step to moral downfall [1]. The moral judgements of the educated and reflective person are not more, but, if anything, less likely to be true than those of the uneducated [2]. If this is seriously Mr. Bradley's meaning, I need not repeat the arguments against it which the first two books of this work were largely occupied in setting forth. I need only say that it is a view of which, in the whole course of ethical speculation, Mr. Bradley and Bishop Butler in some of his more irrational moments are, so far as I am aware, almost the only supporters. I cannot, of course, seriously suppose that Mr. Bradley intends consequences so absurd, but such would seem to be the natural meaning of his often repeated assertions. I will only suggest two other lines of reflection.

In the first place, Mr. Bradley is hardly likely to deny that our particular, immediate, instinctive moral judgements are in their actual content largely the result of custom, tradition, extraneous influence of one kind or another. If these instinctive judgements are not to be critically sifted and made consistent

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 180.

[2] I should of course admit that there are cases where 'instinct' is more likely to go right than reflection, but then there are as many or more cases where 'instinct' without reflection is a cause of immoral conduct, e. g. indiscriminate almsgiving. The reasons which explain the value of 'instinct' have been dwelt on partly in the chapter on the relation between Feeling and Reason in Book I, and partly in the chapter on Authority in Book II.

with themselves, and brought into connexion with a wider range of experience than that with which each individual begins life, not only is there an end to all prospect of moral progress, but there is an end to all possibility of moral 'autonomy,' for the 'instinctive' judgements of the average man clearly owe much to his education. That there is a limit to the extent to which it is desirable that each individual should attempt to think himself clear of the traditional beliefs of his society, I have fully admitted. But, if this criticism of moral beliefs is never to be attempted, I fail to see how the progress which has undoubtedly taken place in the ethical beliefs of the past is to be accounted for; unless Mr. Bradley should fall back upon the somewhat startling paradox that all moral progress has come from the actions of wicked persons who had the presumption to question the crude and unanalysed intuitions of themselves and their society, and by trying to be more moral than their neighbours became *ipso facto* actually less so. I can hardly believe that a Morality entirely heteronomous could be deliberately accepted by Mr. Bradley as his ideal, though there are certainly passages in Mr. Bradley's writings which seem to point in that direction. The second criticism which I would make upon Mr. Bradley's attack upon Casuistry is that he entirely fails to carry out his own principles. In a paper upon Punishment[1] he observes that, though the Darwinian doctrine of Evolution throws no light upon the end of moral conduct, it may have much to say about the means: and he proceeds to defend a system of wholesale infanticide upon similar grounds to those which commended themselves to Plato (though apparently upon a much vaster scale), reinforced by the physiological doctrine of the necessity for selection, natural or artificial, to keep up the efficiency of the race. The advocacy of such an ethical revolution upon such grounds seems to imply that the proper method of Ethics is to form a conception of the social end which we wish to attain, and then to consider (in the light of all available experience) by what action on our part that end is to be reached. Such a method seems totally inconsistent with

[1] 'Some Remarks on Punishment' in the *International Journal of Ethics* (April, 1894).

the doctrine of immediate and unimpeachable oracles, in each man's breast or in the general consciousness of a given time and place, about the details of conduct. It is true that our ethical judgements are not discursive, if by that is meant that our ultimate moral judgements are immediate. But because immediate, they are not necessarily final, nor is the demand for consistency in these judgements necessarily excluded. Where (as is often the case with all facts of apparently immediate experience) two particular judgements seem to contradict one another, we feel compelled to give up or modify one or both; and the progressive effort to remove these contradictions leads to the formation of a general moral ideal, however imperfectly this ideal may reflect itself in the 'general rules' which we necessarily formulate as the result of such reflection. Even, then, in forming our conception of the end there is room for the critical, universalizing, harmonizing action of reflection. Still more obvious is it that for ascertaining the means best fitted in any particular complication of circumstances for the attainment of our end, there may be room for a modification of the instinctive judgements of 'common sense' by all the experience to which the individual can get access, and by all the processes of the reflective understanding by which the results of that experience can be generalized and applied to particular cases. Little as I agree with his conclusion, Mr. Bradley's argument for infanticide supplies an admirable example of the inevitableness of Casuistry, and a very fair illustration of its proper methods.

II

If the method of Ethics adopted throughout this book, and (as we have seen) by Mr. Bradley in one of his moods, be accepted, that scientific discussion of particular cases of conduct which is called Casuistry is certainly possible; and, if the difficulties of such a scientific determination are such as to make it impossible for every individual to undertake to guide his own conduct by such a reflective clearing-up of the ethical end and such an empirical ascertainment of the means as I have just sketched, that would only seem to point to the need for a body of ethical experts who would undertake to issue general instructions for

the guidance of the untrained public, and to assist them in the application of those instructions to the detailed difficulties of particular lives. If we have no great confidence in the practicability or desirability of such a scientific regulation of life, we must ask once more 'why are there in practice such strict limits to the practical usefulness of a Science, the possibility and indeed the actual existence of which we are theoretically bound to admit?'

Many of the objections commonly urged against the possibility of Casuistry seem, indeed, to turn upon easily demonstrated mistakes, confusions, or exaggerations. It is urged that the complexity of life is so great that no two cases of conduct resemble one another, and that therefore each case must be considered on its own merits. If this means that there are no general principles in Ethics at all, the objection is one which has been already dealt with, and which is not open to those who have accepted our ethical method. If it means merely that, besides features which the case has in common with other cases, it has features peculiar to itself, that is true; and it is true equally of every medical case—a consideration which does not prevent Medical Science and medical books from being of the utmost utility. No two cases are exactly alike, but they may be alike in all relevant particulars; or if not alike, the difference can be allowed for in the treatment of the particular case—an allowance which may itself be covered by some more or less definable general principle. The existence of Medical Science and medical books does not dispense with the need for the trained tact of the Physician, or even (in some cases) with the exercise of common sense by the patient. The argument would only tend to show that the trained Casuist must be as important as his Science. Then it is urged that, though the detailed consideration of ethical questions is possible, it is morally unwholesome and undesirable. The objection seems to be largely based upon the concentration of attention upon one or two particular departments of Morality, in which no doubt the objection has some force; though the medical analogy might still allow the apologist of Casuistry to plead that the task, though disagreeable and not without moral peril, has to be faced

on certain occasions and by certain persons. But the most serious misconception which seems to be at the bottom of the objection lies in the assumption that Casuistry necessarily deals with detailed particular cases—either cases which have actually occurred or which may occur, envisaged in all the wealth and variety of circumstance which belongs to actual life. This is a complete misunderstanding. Casuistry deals with classes of cases. And there is no difference in principle between such discussions as we find in the pages of so comparatively uncasuistical a Moralist as Green—discussions, for instance, as to the grounds for asserting the principle of monogamous marriage or as to the conditions under which political rebellion is justifiable—and the kind of cases which fill the pages of the professed theological Casuists, Roman Catholic, Puritan, or Anglican. At most the difference is merely one in the degree of particularity to which the discussion is carried. Even if we admitted that objections exist to the detailed anticipation of those strange and abnormal difficulties which seldom occur, and in which the true solution depends upon such a delicate estimate of circumstances that the actual case will never be exactly the anticipated case, there would still be room for a Casuistry which should deal with the difficulties which do arise every day—the question when if ever it is right to tell a lie, what constitutes a just price or a just wage, what constitutes commercial Morality, the morality of gambling, the legitimacy of field sports or of Vivisection, and the like. And in these questions there would seem to be room both for the casuistical writer and for the trained judgement of the expert in that Science.

The bare mention of the casuistical expert is at once apt to suggest the Jesuit Confessor, and all the justifiable antagonisms as well as the traditional prejudices which are apt to be awakened by the mention either of Jesuits or Confessors. Few Protestant Moralists who have touched upon the subject have been able to avoid the idea that the very existence of Casuistry necessarily involves the system of private Confession, the quite distinct system of 'direction,' the tyranny over Consciences, the superstitious and immoral belief in the efficacy of priestly absolution, the authoritative and external Morality which, if they have not been wholly

confined to the Roman Church, have found their most conspicuous illustrations in the history of that communion. And yet it is obvious that the existence of Casuistry, and even of trained advisers in conduct, no more involves any of these things than the existence of medical and legal Science with the corresponding bodies of practitioners imply a tyranny of the Physicians or of the Lawyers, or a belief in the infallibility or the divine right of either. I am convinced that the prejudice against systematic and detailed Casuistry which is perhaps at bottom wholesome, and the misconception as to the nature of Moral Philosophy which that prejudice has brought with it, are for the most part due simply to the fact that the most elaborate and conspicuous attempt to construct and apply a system of Casuistry has been made by Priests of the Roman Catholic Church, and especially of the Society of Jesus. It may be well, therefore, very briefly to point out what are the features of the system which have brought Casuistry of this type into not undeserved discredit, in order that it may be seen how little a condemnation of such Casuistry necessarily carries with it the idea that there is anything either absurd or pernicious in the scientific consideration of cases of conduct.

In the first place, there is the association of the Science with the whole system of confession, penance, priestly absolution, priestly direction, authoritative Ethics which need not be further insisted on. Such an association, however, while it might easily account for the resulting system of Casuistry being in many ways out of harmony with modern ideals, would not by itself seem specially likely to result in a system of extreme laxity. To understand that feature of the Jesuit system, it is necessary to remember the historical circumstances under which the Jesuit Order grew up. It was the object of that Order to bring back to the Roman Church a Europe which had almost thrown off its yoke. To effect that object in an age of nearly universal Absolutism the Jesuits made it their special business to render the Roman system acceptable to Kings, Princes, nobles, and men of the world. One way of acquiring that influence was to show that the Roman creed offered cheaper as well as more secure 'terms of salvation' than Protestantism. Hence everything

was done to attenuate the discrepancy between the ordinary pleasures and practices of the world and the requirements of Christianity, to offer the man of the world the maximum of indulgence which was compatible with submission to the minimum requirements of the Church and with the use of his influence and authority in its service. This was effected chiefly by the doctrine of Probabilism, which laid it down that a man might safely and unblamably take the course recommended by any 'probable' (or approved) authority, even if in fact and in the judgement of the agent there was a greater weight of Reason and Authority on the other side. A host of learned Theologians set themselves to manufacture the authority which *ipso facto* established the safety of the less thorny path to heaven. To effect this object, valuable assistance was given by the intrinsically immoral doctrine of a fundamental distinction between two classes of sins—mortal and venial—a distinction depending upon the nature of the external act and not upon the degree of moral guilt which it implies. Mortal sins alone entailed damnation in the event of death without absolution. The old patristic list of mortal sins certainly represented an austere Morality enough, but by a system of ingenious distinctions mortal sins could be reduced to venial ones. Mortal sins could be reduced to venial ones by 'venial accidents'—among others, a lack of 'perfection' in the sin. Drunkenness, for instance, was mortal, but only perfect drunkenness. Drunkenness which did not involve the total loss of Reason for a space of an hour was venial [1]. Theft was a mortal sin, but if a servant thought himself insufficiently paid by his master, he could then, under certain conditions, rob his master to a corresponding amount without committing even venial sin [2]. Christianity required men to give alms of their 'superfluities,' but superfluity was dependent upon the rank and circumstances of the person, and no wealth could be superfluous for a man of position [3]. And so on. Men were taught how, if they wished to sin, they could nearly always—so long as they recognized the authority of the Church

[1] St. Alphonso Liguori, *Theol. Moralis* (Parisiis, 1845), L. II, c. 3, Art. ii.

[2] See Lea, *History of Auricular Confession*, II. pp. 395-8.

[3] Pascal, *Les Provinciales*, Lettre xii sq.

and complied with certain ecclesiastical regulations—ensure that their sins should be only venial, even where the Casuist's ingenuity failed to remove even this barrier to inclination. And no accumulation of venial sins or deliberateness in their perpetration could ever amount to a mortal sin. The demoralizing tendency of the whole system is obvious enough. It is fair to remember that the problem of the Roman Casuist was not what conduct Preachers or Confessors should recommend, but what was the minimum of good behaviour by which the penitent could escape the Church's censure, with the temporal and eternal penalties attaching thereto. But this very attempt to fix a minimum of conformity with detailed and prescribed regulations, and practically to acquit of all blame, to rid of all serious anxiety or moral condemnation by themselves or others those who complied with it, was by itself quite as immoral as any of the detailed machinery by which the art of evading obvious duties was taught. This slight sketch of the more objectionable ideas and practices involved in the Probabilist Casuistry of modern Romanism may perhaps be sufficient to suggest how little these features necessarily attach to all Casuistry as such. The business of the Jesuit Moral Theology was not to help people to be as good as possible, but to show how they could be as bad as possible without suffering for it[1]. The immoral tendencies of such a system supply no argument against a Casuistry which should aim at showing what ought to be done by people who seriously want to do what they ought.

III

Having thus, it is hoped, removed some of the prejudices which stand in the way of a dispassioned discussion of the subject, I proceed to ask 'Within what limits is it possible that

[1] By authoritative decisions the Probabilist Casuistry, long vehemently disputed within the pale of the Roman Church, has now become, in its main principles, formally binding on Confessors, though there are, I believe, many who practically ignore it. I do not of course attempt to say how far this system, secretly disliked by the more progressive Roman Catholic clergy, really exercises in modern communities the demoralizing effects which might naturally be expected from it.

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a scientific system of Casuistry can be built up?' And here it becomes important to bear in mind the distinction between the apprehension of ends and the apprehension of means. So far as the right course of action turns upon a correct apprehension of the ethical end, it is based upon an immediate intuitive judgement or system of judgements. And the Moral Philosopher as such has no greater power of making such judgements correctly than other men. No doubt, inasmuch as he has specially directed his attention to the subject, he may perhaps claim that his faculty of moral judgement, if naturally of normal strength, is likely to be better trained than that of other men. For, if he is not merely a Moral Philosopher but a good Moral Philosopher, he must at least not be altogether without the normal capacity for judging conduct (just as a good art critic, though he need not be himself an artist, must at least have some capacity for aesthetic feeling); so that, even if his natural appreciation of the moral value of particular ends in human life be not exceptionally acute, he will at least have exercised his mind more than other men upon the comparative value of different elements in human life, and will thus be less likely to be unduly swayed by an exclusive enthusiasm for some particular form or kind of good life than other men, especially perhaps those men of exceptionally intense moral conviction whose very devotion to one kind of good often makes them underrate the value of others, and whose very enthusiasm for the best often leads them to undervalue the good. All these pleas might, I think, be truly urged; but the fact remains that the Philosopher's power of judging values depends ultimately upon his qualities as a man and not upon his acuteness as a Philosopher, though his superior power of analysing and expressing them may not be without practical usefulness.

Moreover, it must be borne in mind that these judgements as to the relative value of ends rarely admit of exact formulation. It is easy to say that Culture is good and is in the abstract better than ordinary social intercourse, but the whole practical difficulty lies in saying how much of one's life should be devoted to one end and how much to the other. And here we can only admit with Aristotle that the judgement must take the form of 'feeling' or 'immediate perception.' Hence, though the advice

of persons who have thought about the subject is valuable, there are strict limits to the extent to which their generalizations can be stored up, so to speak, and applied to the regulation of other lives than their own. And, in so far as it can be so formulated and communicated, it is rather to the men of intuitive moral genius—to the prophets and the sages—that we should go for advice as to the ultimate purpose and meaning of life than to academic Philosophers. We must remember too what has already been said as to the influence upon moral judgement both of emotional capacity and of actual goodwill. Hence it is in many matters not so much to those who have exceptional powers of thinking or talking about Morality that we should go for guidance as to the moral ideal, as to the men of exceptional moral performance. The complexity of the ethical end is so great that it can often be best represented by a concrete example. Hence we often turn for guidance not even to the prophets or sages so much as to the moral heroes, or to the men who unite both characters. The biography of the best and wisest of such men teaches the nature of the end better than formal discourses. Or if in some matters we feel that the greater ethical minds, just because they have been completely dominated by the importance of the highest things in life, have not explicitly taught or have positively underrated the value of goods less than the highest—if we wanted, for instance, a just estimate of the place of Culture in life—we should turn not so much to the formal ethical treatise as to the writings of Goethe or Ruskin or Matthew Arnold. Finally, it must be remembered that, when we get beyond some very general principles, there is no consensus, either among the experts of any kind or sort or among the general public, as to these questions of value; and that consequently judgements about conduct based upon one man's ideal of life can only be valid for those whose own moral consciousness recognizes and accepts that ideal, at least sufficiently to be willing to regard the other's judgement as more or less authoritative. And, if we regard it as an important part of the moral ideal that (within the limits which have already been dwelt upon) the ethically mature mind should regulate its life by its own and not by other people's ideals, it will not seem

desirable that this reverence for the judgement of others should be pushed beyond a certain point. Within certain limits we should prefer that a man should act wrongly on his own judgement than do what was objectively right on another's. These considerations might easily be expanded, but they will be sufficient to indicate why it is that a Science of Conduct cannot be formulated which should command the sort and degree of general acceptance which are conceded to the laws of health as formulated and taught by medical practitioners and to the detailed precepts based upon them.

So far we have been dealing with ends of action; but there might still be much room for a scientific treatment of the means to the ultimate end, which should have validity for those who share the ideal upon which it is based. The first limitation which suggests itself is that so large a part of conduct directed towards the realization of the ethical end demands, and depends for its effectiveness upon, the co-operation of others, that it is only within small limits that the individual can with advantage attempt the task of considering for himself the means by which this end may most effectively be realized. Nine-tenths of life (so to express it) is already regulated by the rules either of law or custom, rules which in most cases it would do more harm than good to transgress even when they are not intrinsically the best adapted to this end. No doubt the critical examination of these rules is (within certain limits) a very desirable thing, and this constitutes one of the most useful tasks to which the Moral Philosopher can apply himself. And such criticism may in time lead to an alteration of the rules. Formal Moral Philosophy may thus contribute something to that general criticism and remoulding of accepted ethical rules and ideals which is always going on in the general consciousness of every progressive community. But, when the attempt is made by the Moral Philosopher to push his formulation of the rules best adapted to realize the good of Society beyond a certain very modest point, he finds that the task soon requires a knowledge and experience which no one man can possibly possess. Here the objection is not that there is no room for the specialist, but that we want fifty specialisms rather than one. It is not that Casuistry is impossible, but

that Casuistry, when we come to details of conduct, becomes too vast a subject for any one man or any special class of men to profess. Even if we put aside the arts and the trades which (in so far as they can be morally justified) are engaged in making or doing the things conducive to the ideal life, all the professions and specialized callings, all the professors of the separate branches and departments of social Science or Philosophy, represent so many specialists in the Science which determines the means to the good. In practice, and to some extent inevitably, the members of these professions make abstraction of what would ordinarily be called the ethical question. The Physician advises his patient as to the means to one particular end—health—without undertaking to advise him as to the extent to which, under particular circumstances, it is right for him to pursue health; the Lawyer helps his client to win his case—not indeed by all means, but by all means which a certain accepted professional code has recognized—without raising the question whether the client is morally justified in insisting upon a legal right or availing himself of a technical defence[1]. But still it remains true that the professional man is an expert in some particular kind of means to the good. And there are very numerous kinds of such expert knowledge outside the recognized professions. In so far as the means of social good can be attained by legislation, it is the practical Statesman or the theoretical writer on Politics who is the expert; in so far as they can be promoted by the regulation of Charity, the trained charity organizer; in so far as they can be attained by Education, the teacher or the man who has made a study of Education.

There remains, no doubt, for the expert in Ethics pure and simple the task of discussing those questions as to the means to the good with which the professions as such do not occupy themselves—that is, either the more general ethical questions the answer to which is presupposed by the specialists (how far health is to be preferred to other ends, whether and when it is

[1] Of course in each of these cases the professional man often does and ought to give ethical advice to his client, but then the value of his advice depends upon his qualities as a man, though no doubt his special experience has a value in determining even the ethical question.

right to go to law, &c.), or those details of conduct which do not form the province of any recognized office or profession. But even here the knowledge required is so vast that it is hopeless for any one to go beyond very general precepts which often leave the real problems unsolved. Thus, for instance, the question what constitutes commercial Morality is a question to which a professed Moralist might very well apply himself. And I distinctly hold that some training in theoretical Ethics would be a very valuable qualification for any one who undertook such a task. But he would soon find that the knowledge of facts—the actual usages of business, the economic effects of these usages or of any change in them, the possibility of introducing such and such a change, and so on—is so great that only an experienced Moralist who was also an experienced man of business, or at least one who had devoted much time to enquiry into the subject, could satisfactorily undertake the scientific discussion of these casuistical questions which constantly present themselves to every man engaged in trade, from the manager of a great concern down to the salesman who wants to know where legitimate 'puffing' ends and downright misrepresentation begins. Moreover, should the Moralist chance to have had some business experience, or try to avail himself of the experience of others, he would soon discover how very little even business men usually know about the usages, and consequently about the ethical difficulties, of any branch of commerce except their own; and that the wider question how particular practices affect not this or that individual or this or that trade but the community at large is one which the business man has very little considered and is not specially qualified to consider. He would find that the solution of very many ethical problems would demand a considerable knowledge of technical Economics. Thus, as the enquiry extended from one department of life to another, the would-be constructor of a universal Casuistry would soon discover that one kind of practical knowledge after another, one theoretical Science after another, would have to be mastered—that, in short, if the enquiry as to what it is right to do is to descend to the actual particular problems of conduct, even in so far as these could be anticipated and brought under definite

heads or categories—the universal Casuist would require something not far short of universal knowledge. That that is so was one of the precious truths enshrined (amid many ideas of less permanence) in Plato's doctrine that the knowledge of the good involves a knowledge of all Reality.

IV

Are we then to give up altogether the notion that Moral Philosophy may be practically useful in deciding cases of Conscience? By no means. We may indeed dismiss as a baseless dream the idea that there will ever be produced some vast, many-volumed Encyclopaedia of Casuistry by a reference to which either the layman or the casuistic expert may settle a disputed case as a lawyer ascertains the law by reference to his code or his cases, or as the medical practitioner, as soon as he has diagnosed the case, copies his prescription out of a form-book. And, if a Moral Philosopher be a good guide in practical difficulties, it will be rather his qualities as a man—his practical insight, his experience of life, the character which in conjunction with knowledge and experience brings wisdom with it—than his scientific training that will make his opinion valuable. The scientific training by itself will be of very little practical value. But that is a very different thing from denying that, in conjunction with other influences, Moral Philosophy may offer valuable assistance in training the practical judgement. There are a number of mistakes due to mere prejudice, or confusion of thought, or want of reflection, which, in spite of the wide differences of opinion on ethical subjects found among Moral Philosophers as among other people, are almost certain to disappear as the result of that thoughtful consideration of ethical problems which we call Moral Philosophy. There are a certain number of ethical problems about which ordinary people are divided, but about which even now we might confidently appeal to a jury of Moral Philosophers, and expect a nearly unanimous verdict or at least a far smaller range of variation. At all events there are certain opinions which they are pretty sure not to share; and still more confidently it may be said that, though a Moral Philosopher may conceivably hold on many questions

almost any conceivable ethical opinion, he will not urge in favour of it arguments which are often used by those who have not made a scientific study of the subject. It is a great misfortune that in this country (it is otherwise in Germany) we have no word to express the idea of 'Science' which does not suggest the certainty and precision which we are accustomed to associate with the Physical Sciences alone. That is a prejudice which appears to have influenced even philosophical declaimers against the pretensions of Casuistry. In Germany it is recognized that every subject may be treated 'scientifically,' whatever the degree of accurate conclusion it may admit of. When that prejudice is removed, it ought, I think, to be admitted that the scientific treatment of ethical questions may reasonably be expected to aid the development of right ideas about Morality and life in general, to assist in the formation of sound opinions about the still disputed questions of detail, and to assist in the application of those principles to the particular problems of individual or of social life.

In asking more positively what help the Moral Philosopher can contribute to the solution of ethical problems, we must once more revert to the distinction between ends and means. The Moral Philosopher may have no more power of discerning the true end of human life than the normal educated and moral person: and the ideal that he recognizes, in so far as it can be traced to particular minds, will largely be an ideal created for him by the great ethical thinkers who have not always been, though sometimes they have been, systematic Philosophers. But the analysis and systematic exposition of the moral ideal may help to make that ideal clearer, and so to clear up ethical difficulties which arise simply from the want of intellectual lucidity about that ideal of a supreme good which analysis discovers to underlie the ordinary moral judgements of practical people. And the attempt to analyse involves also the attempt at greater consistency; and to get this greater consistency some amendment in the received conception of the end may often be required. And the greater consistency, coherence, and connectedness which the Moral Philosopher finds it necessary to introduce into his own beliefs may spread in time firstly to the actual

students of his works, and then (through the ordinary channels of literature and social influence) to a wider public. So again, when we turn to the question of means, the Moral Philosopher may not be a better judge than other men of the way to secure a given social end. But he must at least have accustomed himself to consider the relation of means to ends, to ask the ground of the received rules of conduct, to bear in mind both the importance of general rules and the limitations to their application, to think of remote consequences as well as immediate ones, and finally to recognize when the solution of the problem depends upon a question of fact or some matter of technical knowledge upon which other experience than his own must be consulted. We have been obliged for the sake of clearness to distinguish the question of means from the question of ends, and yet I have already insisted on the impossibility in practice of so separating them. Every means, as we have seen, has its own positive or negative value; the ethical end is not something over and above all the means, since it consists very largely of activities which, though directed towards an end, are themselves of as much value as the ends which they realize or even of more value. The question of the means to the end is thus also a question of elements in the end. Hence there is no possibility of breaking up each ethical problem so completely into two distinct problems, and handing the solution of each over to a different person: we cannot once for all get the question of the end settled by the spiritual genius, and hand questions of means over to the man of experience and practical skill. Sometimes, indeed, such a separation is possible, but very often the ethical problems will involve both the due appreciation of comparative values and the adaptation of means to ends. In fact, very often the breaking up of the problem into a question of ends and a question of means almost carries with it the solution of it; at least this is just the contribution towards the solution which the Moral Philosopher as such is especially qualified to make.

In ways like these it may reasonably be contended that the study of Moral Philosophy—the labours of the professed Moral Philosopher, the direct study of Moral Philosophy as an element of education, and the indirect influence of its ideas on the

community generally—may contribute a valuable element to the solution of moral problems, to that gradual clearing up of the moral ideal, that gradual decision of disputed questions, that gradual advance to higher ideals, or that fuller application and realization of ideals already accepted, in which moral progress consists. But to say that he may contribute to the solution is a very different thing from supposing that the solution of them can be handed over to the ethical expert as such. The value of a man's opinions upon particular questions of general conduct or individual duty, whether he is a Moral Philosopher or not, will depend no doubt mainly upon his natural capacity for moral insight, upon the training which that capacity has received, upon character, upon general intellectual training, upon experience of life in general or of the particular department and aspect of life in question. But the great difference between the Moral Philosopher and the 'plain man' or the professor of some specialized practical Science is this:—that the Moral Philosopher knows, or ought to know, distinctly what he is aiming at, and the practical man often does not. It is not so much that the Moral Philosopher can answer ethical questions better than other people, but that he knows how to put them better than other people. Take, for instance, the case of Vivisection. As one reads the utterances of Judges, Physiologists, Physicians, Ecclesiastics, Politicians, and Journalists upon the question, one is struck by the fact that not one in fifty of them seems to know what he has got to prove. The Physiologist often shows that he has but a very confused idea of what a moral question is. He labours to prove that Vivisection advances knowledge or saves pain without seeming to be aware that some people might quite intelligibly hold that knowledge ought not to be obtained or pain saved by such and such means or in such and such circumstances, and that the question whether they are right or not cannot be settled by Physiology. On the other hand, the Anti-vivisectionist rails at the immorality of doing evil that good may come without asking how on such a principle he is to justify a surgical operation or a judicial punishment. In the present state of opinion, Moralists are not likely to be in entire agreement about Vivisection more than other people. Even

among Moralists of the same school there is still room for different applications of accepted principles. But even so, it would probably be found that the extremes of opinion would rarely be discovered among competent students of Moral Philosophy. If anybody doubts whether the conscious and deliberate application of theory to moral questions is not capable of enormously reducing the debatable area, he should read Edmund Gurney's Essays on the subject in *Tertium Quid*. That very earnest and independent thinker argued the question on hedonistic-utilitarian grounds, and decided in favour of Vivisection severely limited and regulated; and this is just one of the cases where the decision is not likely to be very much affected by the adoption of an ideal in place of a hedonistic Utilitarianism, though the non-hedonist is likely to give greater weight than the Hedonist to the effect of the thing upon the character of those who practise or witness it.

I may put what I have been saying in another form by saying that the function of the Moral Philosopher in the decision of ethical questions is rather that of the Judge than that of the jury. Consulted as to what a man ought to do under such and such circumstances, he will not, *qua* Moral Philosopher, say, 'You should do this or that,' but rather he will explain the relevant ethical principles, apply them to the facts of the case, and then say, 'If you think that this action will produce such and such results, or if you think such and such an end more important than this or that other end, then do so-and-so; if not, don't. If you think, for instance, that these experiments have such and such a chance of saving pain; if you think that the pain they may save is equivalent to what they must cost; if you think that the good to humanity which they may effect is morally more than equivalent to any hardening of the heart which they may possibly bring with them, then perform these experiments; if not, don't.' Such is the way that the Moral Philosopher will sum up the case, whether to his own Conscience or to somebody else. The Moral Philosopher is the Judge, the Conscience and judgement of the individual (whether the philosopher himself or his client) are the jury.

V

I may add one further remark. Most of the objections brought against Casuistry, whether in its theological or its purely philosophical form, affect mainly the scientific consideration of individual, and especially of abnormal and exceptional, problems in conduct. The most, it seems to me, that Moral Philosophy can do for such cases is to produce, in conjunction with other studies and influences, a habit of mind favourable to their reasonable consideration. We may quite well deprecate the discussion of such abnormal cases by anticipation, and may even admit that when they do occur in actual practice a healthy instinct will decide them better than theoretical subtlety. But the assailant of Casuistry usually talks as if on the general questions of conduct—on those general questions of which each man has to settle a good many for himself one way or another every day between the time he gets up in the morning and the time he goes to bed at night—he talks (I say) as if on such questions as these there was a general consensus, at least among sensible and well-meaning people. Such an assumption seems to me the very shallowest of delusions. Directly we leave words and come to things, the consensus disappears. It is merely the vagueness of language that seems to sanction its existence. People are agreed, no doubt, as to the wrongness of murder. But that is only because murder means killing, except where killing is justifiable. As to the immorality of killing in war, or by means of punishment, or to reduce population, or by way of Euthanasia, there is no consensus at all. No doubt, in these questions of merely negative Morality there is an approximate consensus among the great majority. But come to positive precepts. There, again, we find a consensus as to copy-book headings, such as 'Be truthful, be honest, be charitable, be temperate.' There is a consensus as to virtues; there is none as to duties. 'Be temperate.' Yes. But there are many ways of being temperate. It is possible to eat and drink wealth equivalent to one pound, or even five pounds, a day without positively injuring one's constitution; and it is possible also to live on a shilling a day, or with practice on a great deal less.

Which course am I to adopt, my income and position being so-and-so? I ought to give money to Charity; but how much? I ought to provide for the future; but how much? I ought to devote myself to my profession; but how much time should I give to my pupils? I ought to research; but how ought I to divide my time between research, teaching, and amusement, or more general social duties? It is no use to say that an exact determination of such questions is impossible. There is scarcely a consensus as to the barest outline of an answer. It is on these general questions of conduct, which can never be escaped, rather than in the discussion of abnormal complications of individual circumstance, that the practical application of clearly thought out ethical principles seems likely to be most fruitful.

VI

The question what in detail are the methods by which Moral Philosophy solves these questions of means to the ideal end for individual and community is one which it does not lie within the scope of this work to discuss. There is no conceivable branch of knowledge which may not at this or that point have a bearing upon some question of conduct. Every Science has or may have its social applications. It may no doubt be contended that the Science which has the most direct and immediate bearing upon questions of conduct is the Science of Society in general. It has recently been contended that the place of Moral Philosophy, as it has hitherto been understood, is hereafter to be taken by a 'rational moral Art' based upon a comprehensive Sociology. It is not even suggested that such a Science can give us a new method of discovering the true end at which Society ought to aim—the criterion by which to judge whether one state of society is better than another. And, so long as the suggestion relates merely to the mode of discovering what kinds of conduct are best suited to attain a given end, it cannot be denied that the understanding of Society and the ways in which it evolves is the Science of all others which would be most calculated to throw light upon the means of social improvement and consequently upon problems of individual conduct. It is hardly alleged that such a comprehensive Science exists in a form which

is at present competent to supply much information as to the means of social improvement. Sociology, in the form which it has hitherto assumed, consists for the most part of generalizations which, even if well founded, are far too vague and abstract to be fruitful of practical applications. Such attempts at rapid and immediate application as have hitherto been made are too often vitiated by assumptions and confusions of the kind which we have already examined in connexion with the Ethics of Herbert Spencer. It is a good feature of the more recent sociological teaching that the idea of a complete Sociology, resting for the most part on more or less distant physiological analogies and more or less irrelevant generalizations from Anthropology, seems to be in process of being superseded by the idea of a group of sociological Sciences, each of them dealing with some particular aspect of social phenomena—religious, economic, political, hygienic, and the like—or of careful enquiries, by way of statistics or otherwise, into the causes of particular social tendencies and the remedies for particular social diseases. There is really nothing particularly novel in the idea that the accepted codes of ethical behaviour have been, are being, and must be, criticized and remoulded in the light of advancing knowledge, and that such knowledge must be based upon the study of past and present social facts. The changes that have taken place in the general attitude towards the problem of poverty, for instance, have been profoundly modified by the teaching first of the older political economy and then of the more socialistic tendencies of recent economic thought. Our ideas as to the duties of parents and educators have been revolutionized by a change of sentiment based in part upon experience of the effects of different kinds of treatment, which we may, if we like, call an advance of pedagogic Science. Of Sociology so understood it may fairly be said that there is nothing new about it except the name.

It is no doubt possible to speculate about a future Science of Society which will hereafter sum up and co-ordinate all the results of the separate lines of sociological enquiry. But it may be doubted whether the idea of a single Science of Society does not really represent too vast a programme to be treated with

much success by any special body of experts. The professor of any particular branch of Social Science ought, no doubt, to know something about Society in general and about the Science of Society in general, in so far as such knowledge admits of being reduced to the form of a Science: but when it comes to practical applications it is probable that the opinions of the 'Educationist' (if indeed his opinion is to be preferred to that of the experienced teacher) on a question of education, or of an Economist on a question of financial policy, or of the political thinker on a question of Legislation or Administration will not always be of more value than the opinion of an expert in so comprehensive a science as the Science of Society in general.

Even if we look forward to the gradual building up of a Sociology of a kind which, it is admitted, does not now exist, it will be impossible to admit that ethical Science will ever be wholly swallowed up in that of Sociology. The moral nature of man, though undoubtedly in very close connexion with other aspects of his nature, will always remain a distinct aspect of it, and an aspect quite as much worthy of separate study as the physical or economic aspects of individual or society. It is true, again, that this moral nature can—sometimes, from some points of view, for some purposes—be studied as exhibited on a large scale in the actions, characteristics, and conduct of whole societies, but after all those larger phenomena only admit of being understood in the light of a close study and appreciation of the individual man. Even in studying Society at large, it must be remembered that moral progress, though closely connected with other kinds of progress, is not the same thing as any other kind of progress. It must further be insisted that no possible study of the facts of past history will ever by itself supply a solution of present moral difficulties. The moral ideal grows and developes; its growth is affected doubtless by environment and by history, but we can never construct a moral ideal merely out of the study of the past. It is the tendency of the Sociologist to insist upon the influence which history and circumstance have exercised upon ideals without remembering the equally important influence which ideals—ideals which from their very nature are new and unpredictable—are continually exercising upon

history. The ideals are always growing, and for that very reason it is never possible that the mere study of the past, or even the discovery of sociological laws, can form a complete guide even as to the means to what presents itself to us as the true ideal—still less as to the value of the ideals themselves. It is no doubt well to emphasize the fact that individual conduct often depends upon the answer that is given to large problems of social and political policy which can only be solved by the study of social facts, and cannot be determined off-hand by the intuitions of the average man or even of the moral genius. But there will always remain the question of the individual's duty in the face of a given social situation and of ascertained social laws[1]. And the question what that duty is will always be a question which, in so far as it admits of scientific study and solution at all, must remain the problem of Moral Philosophy, the methods of which, for reasons which have already appeared in the course of our enquiry, can never be precisely the same as those of any other Science.

We might no doubt, if we pleased, break up Moral Philosophy into a Science of ends which is a branch of Metaphysic, and a Science of means which is a branch of general Social Science, but in each case the branch which deals with the question of individual duty is so distinctive a one that it will always demand separate treatment, while the fact that from the ethical point of view the means are part of the end will always forbid a too sharp separation between the two problems. The close connexion between Moral Science and the particular social Sciences which exist or the more comprehensive Social Science which is little more than an aspiration, may be admitted. It is only the patronizing and superior tone which such writers as M. Lévy-Bruhl adopt towards the whole conception of a Moral Science which compels us to insist that it is only by ignoring the real problems of the moral life that that Science can be

[1] I pass over the question of the sense in which we can speak of 'laws' in social matters as a problem belonging in part to Logic, in part to Sociology itself, merely protesting against the idea that such laws are to be identified with mechanical 'uniformities.' The limitations which must always exist to the discovery of such laws have been insisted on in the chapter on Free-will.

treated as already superseded by a positive Science of Society. The distinction between what is and what ought to be, between what is and what is good, must always be an important one except for those who believe that they have abolished the latter category altogether. For those who believe in the distinction there must always remain a Science of the good and of the means thereto [1].

VII

It is no doubt extremely important that the ethical enquirer should not make immediate edification his primary object. His business is to examine, to test, and to criticize existing moral ideas; and, if he is to perform that task, he must avoid the temptation to become the mere apologist of the actually received Morality. But, if the primary object of every Science is simply knowledge for its own sake, it is unreasonable to assume that any Science will exercise no influence upon practical life, and that assumption is peculiarly gratuitous when we have to do with the Science whose very object-matter is practice. And

[1] These remarks are suggested by M. L. Lévy-Bruhl's *La Morale et la Science des Mœurs* (Ed. ii., 1904). The real difference between the author's position and that taken up in the present work lies not so much in what the author actually contends with regard to the relations between Sociology and Morality as in the whole conception of the Universe, of Man, and of Society implied by his book—a conception which is rather assumed than established by any attempt to grapple with its difficulties. On these ultimate questions this clever writer does not appear to have advanced much beyond the position of Comte and Herbert Spencer, though he has no doubt avoided many of their crudities; but at bottom he traces the idea of moral obligation exclusively to the operation of external social sanctions. M. Rauh, in his *L'Expérience morale*, seems to me to have a much juster ideal of the true relations between the individual and the social Conscience, and again between the place of Science and the individual moral judgement. 'Entre l'art de vivre et la philosophie de la morale il y a place pour une science de la vie (ib., p. 237).' This seems to be just the modern equivalent of the old Casuistry which I desiderate—the attempt to bring the actual, growing Conscience of mankind into contact with the real problems of life and Society in general in the light of full scientific knowledge of Man and of Society; though the author seems to me somewhat unduly to disparage the importance of Metaphysic as a basis (though not a substitute) for the theoretical study of Morals, and even its practical value in helping to a proper appreciation of the idea of Morality in general and consequently of duties in particular.

the practical value of ethical Science does not consist, I believe, entirely in the discussion and settlement of particular disputed questions of conduct. I am prepared to contend that the study of the general principles of Moral Philosophy is not only an important element in general intellectual education, but that it is likely (if conducted in the right way) to exert a stimulating influence upon character and life. 'To the attainment of the virtues knowledge conduces little or nothing,'[1] said Aristotle. That is quite true; and it is no less true that 'knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth.' But it is true, also, that very often 'more harm is done from want of thought than want of will.' To produce the habit of reflection about conduct, or what Thomas Arnold used to call 'moral thoughtfulness,' is one of the chief objects of moral education. After all, it would really be strange if the thinking about duty should be found, as a rule, to have a demoralizing tendency. Moral Philosophy will not make a good man any more than Theology will make a religious man. But it has usually been considered that a certain amount of religious or theological teaching is helpful in that direction, when conjoined with that personal influence by which alone, as it has been well said, Virtue is really teachable. It is a modest plea to urge that good effects may, likewise in due subordination to the living influence of personal character and other emotional forces, spring from the thoughtful consideration of moral principles carried to whatever point of theoretical abstraction is demanded by the general level of the individual's education and culture.

Such study is likely to be beneficial in two ways—in a directly ethical way and in another way which may be called ethico-religious. The mere clearing up of difficulties and perplexities of personal conduct is likely to be the least conspicuous effect which the study of Moral Philosophy may have upon those who study it in a right spirit. First, as regards the directly ethical way—there are, as we have discovered, strict limits to the extent to which even professed students of Moral Philosophy are likely to be the better able to clear up such difficulties owing to their theoretical training. But exceptional

[1] *Eth. Nic.* II, cap. iv, 3 (p. 1105 *b*).

difficulties are not the greatest difficulties of practical life. Apart altogether from the abnormal crises which supply problems for the Casuist and plots for the literary Artist, most people find it hard enough, or would find it hard enough if they thought more, to deal with the difficulties that occur in every life and at all periods of that life. It is by giving men a clearer conception of the end of life and of their particular duty in it that Moral Philosophy is, I think, likely to be of most practical use. And this influence, be it observed, is to a large extent independent of the particular system which the man learns and the particular books or living teachers whom he chances to fall in with. To some extent every one must build up his own ideal of life for himself: but he may be powerfully aided in building it up by having his attention directed to the theoretical aspects of the subject, and by being forced to give a definite answer to the questions which men are tempted to postpone till the answer to them is useless. Intellectual clearness is not the chief prerequisite of a good life. In the infancy of speculation men were disposed to exaggerate its influence. Socrates and the great Stoics, though even they were quite as much ethical prophets as speculative philosophers, have been less successful ethical teachers than the Saints and the heroes who have cared little for ethical theory. But Socrates was not wrong in believing that intellectual clearness about the ideal of life is one of the influences that make for Morality, at least by taking away some of the obstacles to it in characters not wanting in the desires and emotions from which right action must spring. It will very likely be objected that I am confusing the functions of the moral teacher with that of the Moral Philosopher. But I should submit that no absolute line can be drawn between the provinces of the two. There is some theory even in the Catechism; and there is much practical teaching, good or bad, to be found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, of Kant and Hegel, of Spinoza and Schopenhauer. The higher the intellectual level of the moral teaching, the larger may be the amount of theory introduced into it, or at least the larger may be the influence which a sound moral theory may exercise upon it. All ethical teaching should be, as far as possible, consistent with

a sound ethical Philosophy, though the practical teacher may himself be very little of a Philosopher. When the object of the teaching is mainly practical, the element of theory will naturally be kept very much in the background. In the teaching of Moral Philosophy as a branch of intellectual study the intellectual side—the desire to get theoretical truth—should be uppermost: and no desire for immediate edification should prevent difficulties being probed to the bottom. It is otherwise in the practical teaching of the School, or the newspaper, or the pulpit. But the man who thinks and the man who acts are, after all, one and the same person: and at a high level of Culture the theoretical study of Ethics may often be a means of awakening interest in the practical problems of life, and of stimulating the sense of duty—particularly in minds in which the break-up of traditional religious or ethical systems has involved a confusion or a reaction which does not always stop at the merely intellectual form under which moral ideals have been presented to them. There is no reason why Moral Philosophers, or persons not uninfluenced by the systematic study of Moral Philosophy, should not also to some extent be moral teachers, as they were (with admirable results) in the days of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius.

The second way in which Moral Philosophy is likely to be practically useful is through its connexion with Religion. A reasonable Theology must be based upon a sound ethical system: or, to put it in a more concrete way, it must be based upon the evidence and the contents of the moral consciousness[1]. That does not of course mean that the individual must have consciously gone through the intellectual process by which the reflective Philosopher arrives at his speculative system. Even for the highly intellectual man (as I have fully explained) Religion may at times be perfectly rational and yet largely 'unconscious'—in the sense that its intellectual basis is not fully analysed. But, in the present state of religious thought, it is but too obvious that for many besides persons of the highest education this 'unconscious' Religion often gives way through

[1] This must be understood in the sense and with the qualifications set forth in the first and second chapters of this book.

the breaking-down of the historical and dogmatic traditions with which it has been associated. I believe the study of Moral Philosophy to be one of the means by which for such minds Religion may be purified and its influence restored. No doubt the speculative basis of Religion must be sought not in Ethics taken by itself but in Ethics taken in connexion with that general theory of the Universe which we call Philosophy. But of all branches of Philosophy Ethics is the one which has the closest connexion with religious belief; and, if its province be extended so as to cover the connexion between the idea of an objective Morality and a religious view of the Universe, it is, I think, not impossible for Ethics to be studied with advantage even by persons who have hardly the leisure or capacity for any very thorough study of pure Logic or pure Metaphysics. There is no hard and fast line between Moral Philosophy and a sound practical teaching of Ethics; just as there is none, or ought to be none, between the highest Religious Philosophy and the Religion which may be taught to a child. There may be teaching and writing and study at every level of theoretical thoroughness and completeness. The reading of formal books of Moral Philosophy must necessarily be confined to a comparatively small class; but the larger that class can become, the more it is likely that the general teaching of Religion and Morality will be pervaded by the influence of a sound religious and ethical Philosophy [1].

[1] It may be objected, perhaps, that I am assuming that the Philosophy which will be taught is the particular system expounded in these pages (or some other system favourable to a theistic Religion based on Morality); and that the teaching of Moral Philosophy may result, either through the influence of particular teachers and books or through the working of the readers' and pupils' own minds, in a sceptical attitude towards both Religion and Morality. This is of course true, but such results have been known to follow from the teaching of the most rigidly conservative systems of Ethics and Theology. Of course there are limits to the extent to which it is desirable that speculative questions should be presented to untrained or very immature minds. But I freely confess that I know of no way of teaching people to think without their sometimes taking the liberty to think differently from their teacher. For all that, I am prepared to maintain that to make people think is both a good thing in itself and on the whole likely to have good results in the more narrowly ethical sense.

These remarks are made from the point of one who personally believes that the idea of an objective Morality logically involves the theistic view of the Universe, and is most effectively taught in connexion with that view. But I do not limit the value of this teaching of Moral Philosophy to the influence of persons and books in harmony with these views. I should expect some good effects to flow from the teaching of any Philosophy which recognizes the objectivity of the Moral Law; and much of what I have said of the practical effects of ethical teaching might even be applicable to the teaching of systems of a sceptical or destructive tendency; since the moral consciousness exists even in those who deny its authority or misunderstand its nature, and its influence may be increased even by inadequate attempts at the explanation of it. Still it is impossible for one who admits the influence of theory upon practical life to deny that the tendency of false or one-sided or sceptical theoretical influences may, and must in the long run, have a destructive and injurious practical influence. But it is not for those who believe in the ultimate rationality of the Universe to attempt to counteract the influence of such theories by the suppression or discouragement of serious thinking.

Moral Philosophy must be looked upon primarily as a speculative Science. Its study requires no other justification than the fact that it is the study of one of the most fundamental of our intellectual ideas, of one most important department or aspect of Reality. But in considering the question by whom and to what extent Moral Philosophy should be studied, the question of its practical bearing upon life is not irrelevant. Even the purely speculative Science should have its group of special students, but it need not necessarily have a place in ordinary non-specialist Education. A few words may be said on this latter topic.

VIII

The place of Moral Philosophy in Education must depend in part, of course, upon the place which we assign to Philosophy in general; and it is impossible here to attempt an adequate defence of the position that Philosophy is the ideal culmination

and goal of all non-specialist Education. The reason for that conclusion is simply the fact that Philosophy is the Science of the Universe at large: some thought and some ideas about the Universe at large do seem almost obviously to form part of an ideal education. And in that Science of the Universe at large the Science which deals with the ends of human life and the means by which they are to be attained must naturally occupy a peculiarly prominent place. It is possible, of course, to impart ideas about the true end of human life in other ways than by the theoretical study of Morality—by literature, by history, by systematic religious and moral teaching of the hortative, authoritative, or emotional kind. But when that questioning spirit which it is the business of the highest Education to evoke has once been aroused, it will not be content with a moral instruction which rests wholly upon Authority or appeals only to the emotions. Some knowledge of the nature and grounds of moral obligation should indeed form part of all Education, even the most elementary—some teaching about the existence and authority of Conscience, and about the general rules of action. When this kind of Education is carried up as it were to the highest intellectual level, it becomes Moral Philosophy. There is no absolutely sharp line of distinction between those general ideas about the Universe which actually do form part of all Education, even as it is, and that systematic and reasoned enquiry which we call Philosophy. When and in proportion as the attempt to think about things in general becomes systematic and thoroughgoing, it becomes Philosophy. In the same way there is no absolute line of distinction between simple moral instruction when once it attempts to give a reason—when it says 'don't do this *because* Conscience forbids you' or 'don't do that *because* it gives pain or has such and such other bad results'—and the most scientific Ethics. Just as an ideal intellectual education would culminate in Philosophy, so the ideal moral education would culminate in Moral Philosophy. It is true that when we reach the intellectual level which we call systematic Philosophy, it is an essential part of the intellectual discipline that we should not be too narrowly or immediately eager about practical results. While we are actually engaged in speculation,

the mind must be opened not only to the question 'what is duty' or 'what is moral obligation,' but also to the question whether there be such things as duty and moral obligation or not. But that does not prevent our holding that in the long run, at a certain level of intellectual development, for minds and characters duly prepared, it is to the interest of practical Morality that such questions should be raised; and that the attempt to answer them is an instrument not only of intellectual but of moral Education. And, if Religion be, in the sense which has been explained in previous chapters, founded upon the testimony of the moral consciousness, it will be a means of religious Education also. In an age in which authoritative Religion often loses its hold over cultivated minds in consequence of the discovery of the inadequate views of History and Theology with which it has been associated, the study of Philosophy, and especially the ethical and religious side of it, may be a peculiarly valuable means of strengthening or restoring the beliefs which are essential or most favourable to the highest kind of life. These remarks are of course made from the point of view of those who believe that such questions as 'what is duty?' 'what is the end of the Universe?' and the like admit of a constructive answer. What is the best means of moral Education from the point of view of those who do not believe that there is in our sense of the word any such thing as Morality or moral obligation, is a question which I do not profess to answer.

I will not here enlarge upon the practical reasons which make our ideal of an education culminating in Philosophy an ideal which cannot actually be carried out even in the case of all those who receive what is, in the ordinary sense of the word, the highest education. The ideal education must remain an ideal: those who are best trained in Science or History, in Literature or Philology, must often in practice learn very little about that philosophic view of the Universe as a whole which is the ideal culmination of all knowledge: those who busy themselves with ultimate questions about the Universe must too often remain ignorant enough of the particular branches of knowledge upon which ideally a true Philosophy of the Universe should rest. All we can do is to aim at the ideal in so far as practical needs and cir-

cumstances permit. I will only make two further remarks which directly concern the place of Moral Philosophy in Education. The first is that Moral Philosophy seems peculiarly well adapted for the study of those who can only study Philosophy a little. It is less technical, and in its earliest stages less difficult than Logic or Metaphysic: and, though it is not (I think) desirable that it should be taught in entire disconnexion from the metaphysical or theological problems to which it ultimately leads, these problems are here approached from their most practical and least technical side. The other point on which I should insist is that it would seem especially desirable as an element in the education of all whose sphere of work is man or human society in general, rather than the dealing with material things or even with any highly specialized department of human affairs. It would seem specially important for the clergyman (on account both of its theoretical connexion with Theology and of its practical bearings upon life); for the teacher, who can have no theoretical idea of the object of Education without it; for the writer on public affairs—I hope it will not be thought to involve too Aristotelian a view of the State if I add the practical politician or civil servant. If from one point of view Moral Philosophy connects itself with Metaphysic or speculative Philosophy, there is another point of view from which it is closely connected with the theoretical study of Politics, of Law, and of Social Philosophy in all its branches. These can hardly be dealt with scientifically at all without some previous study (however general and elementary) of that ideal of human life which, as Aristotle held, is the same for the man and for the citizen, and of that moral nature of man which makes such an ideal possible. Moral Philosophy is the essential basis of any Political Philosophy that has any claim to be called Philosophy at all. Political Philosophy is generally regarded as concerned chiefly with the means to the end of human life in so far as it can be promoted by State action. There is indeed so much consensus as to what is good in human life, in that broad and rough way in which the good can be promoted by State action, that for the most part political discussion, whether theoretical or practical, is concerned chiefly with the question of means. But still no true theory of the State, or of

its functions and limitations, is possible without some preliminary clearing up of the ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, good and evil. And there are a large class of questions relating to State interference in various departments of life—Punishment, Liberty, Coercion, Toleration, and the like—which lie on the borderland between Moral and Political Philosophy, and which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with without some consideration of purely ethical problems. In no department of life is it easier to show that the most important practical results have followed from the view which people have consciously or unconsciously taken of what may seem very theoretical and speculative questions. I have explained already that in questions of practical action the Moral Philosopher as such is a man who knows how to put the question better than other people rather than the man who knows how to answer it better than other people. But very often to put the question rightly goes a long way towards giving a satisfactory answer to it. In their attitude towards social problems, in their dealings with crime, in their relations with lower races, in their religious and educational policy, modern States have been and obviously are at this moment dominated by all kinds of theories of the kind which it is the business of Moral Philosophy to test. It is a modest claim for Moral Philosophy to contend that some acquaintance with these questions in their speculative form may conduce to clearness of view in dealing with them on their practical side.

The mention of Political Philosophy may, I trust, be valuable as an indication of the kind of practical usefulness which we may expect from Moral Philosophy. As regards Political Philosophy the prejudices which have stood in the way of a reasonable view of the relation between theory and practice are largely absent. Nobody supposes that the political thinker as such is necessarily well qualified for any one of the branches of practical Statesmanship or administration. Everybody is aware that many of the very greatest Statesmen have been entirely ignorant of, or very little influenced by, political theories in anything like a speculative form. And yet there is no shallower view of History than to suppose that in the political sphere theories have not profoundly influenced life—theories which

have often had their origin in the brains of purely speculative or academic thinkers. Plato's mistake about the Philosopher-King consisted only in the assumption (so far as we take him literally) that the person who excogitates and expounds the theories must be also the person to give them practical effect as legislator or administrator. The influence which the Moral Philosopher has exercised, and with advantage might exercise to a still greater extent, over practical life is, I believe, of the same kind as the influence of the theoretical writer on Politics: and to a very large extent that influence will be exercised in the same sphere, for it is (as I have already contended) in respect of large questions of public or social policy that there is most room for the theoretical discussion of questions of duty, and that the dangers and limitations which attach to the attempt theoretically to discuss details of personal conduct have the least application. To discuss some large question of social duty or policy—the uses of wealth, the limits of personal expenditure, the way to deal with poverty, the treatment of the unemployed, the problem of religious and moral education, the treatment of crime, the organization of industry, the morality of Vivisection, the duty of the higher races to the lower—with due reference to first principles would seem to be the proper sphere for such applied Moral Philosophy or Casuistry as is possible and desirable under the conditions of modern life. The Moral Philosopher as such has of course only to do with the principles, not with the particular applications, and to discuss any one of these subjects in any detail involves many kinds of knowledge and experience which the Philosopher as such is very far from possessing. To make himself master of the knowledge required for the solution of some one practical problem or group of problems, and to discuss it in the light of a reasonable theory of life and of Society, would be enough to absorb the energies of a Moral Philosopher who wished to become a Casuist of the kind that the modern world requires.

In the present work the discussion of even the most general problems of conduct has been smaller perhaps than is usual in formal treatises upon Moral Philosophy. I have touched upon such questions sufficiently, I trust, to indicate the lines on which they should be dealt with, and to avoid the imputation of having

shirked the real difficulties of our subject. Even for the purely theoretical interests of Moral Philosophy it is essential, I believe, at every turn to take practical examples. Whatever may be thought of its claims as a definite Science, Casuistry is essential for the illustration of Moral Philosophy even in its most abstract form. In the present work the treatment of particular virtues or duties has hardly gone beyond the limits of illustration. To give a more detailed account of the ideal of life—of the chief goods of life, their relative importance or their place in *the* good, and the main rules of action which conduce to the attainment of these goods, is, I believe, a task which falls strictly within the province of Moral Philosophy. It might even be contended that the very general discussions with which this work has been chiefly occupied are the mere Prolegomena to an ideal 'System of Moral Philosophy.' But in the present state of ethical Science, there is no consensus even as to the Prolegomena. It is here that the purely theoretical or strictly philosophical difficulties of the subject lie, though it is after these Prolegomena are settled that the real difficulties for the practical ethical judgement begin. Perhaps I shall some day be tempted to essay some fuller account of the practical ideal which to my own mind would seem to result from the principles which I have endeavoured to indicate. Why a more detailed application of the ideal to the concrete difficulties of individual and social life is a task which is not likely to be attempted with success by persons much better qualified for the task than the present writer, I have already tried to explain. Such a task is not the proper task of Moral Philosophy, not because Casuistry is impossible or immoral, but because it is too extensive a Science to be professed, and too difficult an Art to be practised, by any one person or any particular class of academical or professional persons. The Science and Art of Casuistry merge in that Science and Art of Life which all branches of theoretical knowledge, all branches of enquiry or literature, all professions and callings are or ought to be in various manners and degrees engaged in constructing and in practising. It is enough for the Moral Philosopher and his Science if, by the discussion of the more general principles upon which such questions should be decided, they may make a not unimportant contribution to their solution.

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